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**THE PRINCIPLES**  
**MORAL SCIENCE.**

*N<sup>o</sup> 109*  
**PART I.**

**GENERAL PRINCIPLES.**

**CHAP. I.**

**OF THE ULTIMATE OBJECT OF HUMAN PURSUIT.**

**MORALITY** is that branch of science which proposes to regulate the actions of men.

The Science of Morals differs from every other science in this, that it is not occupied in the investigation of what is, or of what actually exists in the world; but in the discovery of what ought to be, or of what ought to exist.

The excellence of history consists of its exhibiting a correct detail of what has actually been done by men. It is the business of what is called Natural History to give an account of all the plants, animals, and minerals that are to be found in the world. Metaphysics, or the natural history of mind, ought to describe the di-



## THE OBJECT

... and operations, of feeling and thinking being ~~investigating~~ the minute qualities of bodies as they appear in their repulsions and combinations; and Astronomy inquires into the magnitude and movements of the celestial bodies. Thus every other science is employed in finding out facts, and representing things as they are; but it is the business of Morality, or moral science, to exhibit to our view, not what men have done, but what they ought to do; not what they are, but what they ought to be.

In forming a plan of conduct, a rational being must always consider two things; first, the object or end which he proposes to attain by his actions; and, secondly, the means by which that end is to be successfully pursued. From this distinction arises a division of morality into the two following questions: First, What ought we to regard as the most important object of human pursuit, or as the business of man in this world? And, secondly By what means is this object to be attained? or how is our great business in life to be best fulfilled?

It is evident that the first of these questions is the most important. A mistake, with regard to what ought to be the chief and ultimate object of human pursuit, must necessarily diminish the value of all our exertions: For, in the great business of life, if we set out in pursuit of a

wrong object, the labour of our days, and our best schemes and reasonings, will be fruitlessly thrown away. Even the vigour, the skill, and the perseverance we exert in pursuit of what is ultimately of no importance, will only render our conduct an exhibition of more strenuous and more consummate folly: Whereas, when engaged in attempting to obtain what is truly, worthy of pursuit, we shall at least be well employed. Every step we advance will be so much successfully performed of the great business of life, and no part of our labour will be lost. In addition to this, it may be remarked, that when it shall once be decided in a satisfactory manner what that is which we ought to regard as the object of all our efforts, and as the great purpose of our existence, it will be easy to point out the means of pursuing and of attaining to it, as these means will be suggested by the very nature and character of our ultimate object of pursuit, and by the situation in which we are placed with regard to it.

The general opinion upon the subject is this, that the great object which nature and reason teach men to pursue in this world, is Felicity or Happiness; meaning by happiness a continual succession of pleasing thoughts, emotions, and sensations. This opinion was entertained by all the ancient philosophers, although they differed widely about the best means of pursuing happi-

ness. This opinion has also been entertained by the ablest, or at least by the most popular modern writers; but they have endeavoured to engraft upon it, a system of universal benevolence, and have asserted, that the great object of every man's pursuit ought to be to promote the individual and general happiness of the human race. According to this system, therefore, that action is the best which produces, or has a tendency to produce, the greatest portion of felicity in the world; and that action is the worst which produces, or has a tendency to produce, the greatest portion of misery.

This opinion, that happiness is our wisest and best object of pursuit, has been so generally diffused, that the multitude of speculative men who, of late years, have employed themselves in the discussion of moral and political subjects, appear to have adopted it as an undoubted truth. Accordingly, the argument uniformly employed in favour of ancient institutions is this, that they are necessary to the happiness of mankind; which will infallibly be lost for ever, if they be overturned. The argument, on the contrary, that is used to prevail with men to destroy the institutions of their forefathers, is of a similar nature. It is contended, that these old establishments are hostile to human felicity, and prevent mankind from enjoying all the happiness of which they are capable. Every government:

promises felicity to the nation which it rules, as the reward of obedience to authority; and every government, whatever its form or character may be, pretends that the object of all its efforts and cares is to produce the general happiness of the people.

But although mankind have thus agreed in speculation to consider happiness, or a succession of agreeable thoughts and sentiments, as the only valuable object of human pursuit, it is nevertheless true, that neither men nor women, philosophers nor the vulgar, do, in practice, regard with much approbation either their own conduct, or the conduct of other persons, when they act upon this principle. We are so far from valuing men in proportion to the pleasures and the degrees of delight that have been enjoyed by them, that we never esteem their characters so highly, as when we know that they have passed a life of toil and anxiety, have encountered pain and danger without reluctance, and have treated existence itself, and all its enjoyments, with contempt. It is the business of the poets to record human sentiments and opinions with correctness; and to them, as they have no philosophical theory to support, it is fair to appeal upon this subject. Shakespeare represents Othello the Moor as giving this account of the kind of courtship by which he, though a black man, con-

trived to interest the affections of a beautiful Venetian woman :

*Othello.* Her father lov'd me ; oft invited me ;  
 Still question'd me the story of my life,  
 From year to year ; the battles, sieges, fortunes  
 That I have pass'd :  
 I ran it through, ev'n from my boyish days,  
 To th' very moment that he bad me tell it.  
 Wherein I spake of most disastrous chances,  
 Of moving accidents by flood and field ;  
 Of hair-breadth 'scapes in th' imminent deadly breach ;  
 Of being taken by the insolent foe,  
 And sold to slavery ; of my redemption thence,  
 And portance in my travel's history :  
 Wherein of antres vast, and desarts idle,  
 Rough quarries, rocks, and hills whose heads touch  
                   heav'n,  
 It was my hent to speak. Such was the process,  
 And of the cannibals that each other eat,  
 The Anthropophagi ; and men whose heads  
 Do grow beneath their shoulders. All these to  
                   hear  
 Would Desdemona seriously incline.  
 But still the house-affairs would draw her thence ;  
 Which ever as she could with haste dispatch,  
 She'd come again, and with a greedy ear  
 Deavour up my discourse. which I observing,  
 Took once a pliant hour ; and found good means  
 To draw from her a pray'r of earnest heart,  
 That I would all my pilgrimage dilate ;  
 Whereof by parcels she had something heard,  
 But not intently. I did consent,

And often did beguile her of her tears,  
 When I did speak of some distressful stroke  
 That my youth suffer'd. My story being done,  
 She gave me for my pains a world of sighs:  
 She swore,—in faith 'twas strange, 'twas passing  
     strange;  
 'Twas pitiful, 'twas wond'rous pitiful:—  
 She wish'd, she had not heard it;—yet she wish'd  
 That heav'n had made her such a man. She thank'd  
     me,  
 And bad me, if I had a friend that lov'd her,  
 I should but teach him how to tell my story,  
 And that would woo her. On this hint I spake;  
 She lov'd me for the dangers I had past.

*OTHELLO, Act. I. Scene 8.*

Philosophers think like the rest of mankind  
 upon this subject. Although they begin their  
 systems with a declaration that happiness is the  
 most valuable of all attainments; yet when they  
 afterwards come to treat of human actions in de-  
 tail, they never fail to approve of that conduct  
 in which the greatest degree of integrity and of  
 vigour of mind have been displayed, however  
 much misery it may have produced. The an-  
 cient Epicureans were the only philosophers  
 who ever expressed themselves consistently upon  
 this point. They asserted that Felicity, or a con-  
 tinual succession of pleasures, is the proper and  
 most rational object of human pursuit; and they  
 boldly avowed, that a man acts absurdly when he

neglects his own ease and enjoyments on account of any notions of duty, integrity, or public spirit. But this opinion has always appeared odious to the common sense of mankind. The Stoics, who were the great antagonists of the Epicureans, were less consistent. They acknowledged, that our great business in this world is to produce happiness; but they asserted, at the same time, that to act steadfastly and skilfully is the only valuable object of pursuit. To reconcile these two opinions, they were under the necessity of alleging, that a wise and virtuous man is capable of being happy under disappointment, sickness, exile, and tortures. The absurdity of this assertion has cast a degree of ridicule upon the stoical philosophy, and brought its pure and elevated precepts into no small discredit.

The truth is, that in almost all branches of science mankind succeed better in practice than in theory. Practical men were for ages accustomed to extract the metals from their different ores, and at pleasure to reduce them back to a state of ore or earth; but it is only within these few years that philosophers have understood the nature of the change that takes place in such a process; and doubts exist whether they understand it to this hour. The same thing has happened in morals. Ordinary men have found little difficulty in discerning the conduct which

their duty requires them to adopt; though philosophers have been mightily perplexed to find out a good reason for calling one action right and another action wrong. As it is always of importance, however, that our actions should be founded upon rational principles, or that practice and theory should correspond, no apology can be necessary for an attempt to introduce greater precision and consistency into our conceptions concerning that which ought to be the employment of man in this world.

It appears to me, then, that the great object which the human race ought to pursue, and the attainment of which they ought to regard as the business of their lives, is not to produce happiness, pleasure, or felicity, in themselves or others; but that, on the contrary, the end for which they were formed, and which alone they can pursue with success, is the improvement of their whole intellectual faculties, whether speculative or active. In one word, it is the business of man in this world to endeavour to become an excellent being, possessing high powers of energy and intelligence. This is his chief good; and ought to be the great and ultimate object of his pursuit, to which every other consideration ought to be sacrificed.

If this principle, that intellectual excellence, or the perfection of the mind and of its rational powers, is the most important and valuable object of human pursuit, can be clearly establish-



ed, it will follow, that those actions are good, and right, and best, which produce, not happiness or pleasure, but the greatest portion of knowledge, ability, and intellectual perfection in the world ; and that those actions are the worst, which produce, or have a tendency to produce, not suffering, but the greatest degree of ignorance, of stupidity, and of intellectual weakness and degradation. It will even follow, that the rulers of nations (though they are seldom so well employed) do actually misapply their labour, and mistake their duty, when they imagine that their proper business consists in conferring felicity upon their fellow-creatures.

I shall here endeavour to prove, that the great task, to the performance of which the existence of every man ought to be devoted, consists of two branches : first, to produce the intellectual improvement of his own individual mind and character ; and, secondly, to produce the improvement of the minds of other rational beings.

I. 1st, In all undertakings, the first question among rational men is uniformly this: Supposing us to engage in a particular pursuit, what prospect have we of success? The object of the undertaking may be great and valuable ; but if there is no reason to expect that the pursuit of it can prosper, it is justly disregarded as an idle project that will never afford any reward for our efforts. This is precisely the case with regard to

happiness. It is no doubt a fine thing if it could be attained ; but none ever pursued it with success. It is like the country in the romance, in which the stones of the field are all gems and gold, and in which overflowing plenty abounds : it is a fine country, but nobody can go there.

It is scarcely necessary to attempt to prove, by arguments, that a state of happiness cannot be attained in this world \*. The history of mankind, both in ancient and modern times, sufficiently establishes the fact. Some have expected to find felicity in riches ; others have sought it from power, from pleasure, and even from fair and upright conduct : but they have all been unsuccessful. Disappointments have awaited them ; and bad health, or other unforeseen calamities, have rendered their efforts fruitless. Even when no visible cause of infelicity existed, it has been found impossible to enjoy a high degree of happiness for any long period, merely because all human pleasures diminish by a repetition of enjoyment.

Good health, and a natural cheerfulness of temper, produce as high a degree of happiness as we are capable of enjoying for any length of time. But these we cannot bestow upon our-

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Three books have been written to demonstrate that happiness cannot be attained in this world. These are, *Ecclesiastes*, by Solomon king of the Jews ; *Candide*, or the *Optimist*, by Voltaire ; and *Rasselas*, by Dr Johnson.

selves; although we may no doubt throw them away. The true state of the case seems to be this: A certain limited degree or portion of pleasure is enjoyed by man in this world; but this portion or degree is not produced by human labour or industry. It is a gift bestowed by the Author of our Existence, and arises not from any contrivance on our part. It is even given with little appearance of discrimination. The young and the ~~old~~, the high and the low, the rich and the poor, the wise and the foolish, are all nearly upon a level with regard to it. Like the rain or the light of heaven, it comes freely, or not at all; insomuch, that those men who have seriously engaged in the pursuit of happiness have uniformly confessed, that all anxiety and labour concerning it are absurd, as they enjoy it most who court it least.

For it is a singular truth, that the degree of happiness which nature bestows upon us cannot be increased by our exertions. The European merchant, who lives in a palace surrounded by luxuries, but whose wants have increased with his riches, has little reason to boast of superior felicity, to what the Hottentot enjoys in his hut, in the midst of his cows and his swine. It is in vain to say, that this arises from an improper mode of pursuing happiness, and that it ought to be sought in the practice of virtue. It is not true, that men always increase their felicity in pro

portion to their progress in moral worth or intelligence. An ignorant man often sleeps very sound, and enjoys good health, without feeling any want of more knowledge. If the stupid have less pleasure, they have also less uneasiness than the reflecting and the acute. To be pleased with ourselves, is unquestionably one of the highest of all enjoyments. A virtuous man tastes this pleasure in the possession of a good conscience; but it must be admitted, that a fool also tastes it, in its most exquisite degree, in the possession of complete self-conceit, or of an unmeasurable vanity. There is a flow of spirits which often falls to the lot of the stupid and the guilty, that produces more complete felicity, and affords a better defence against uneasiness and care, than all the wisdom, or even fortitude, that ever was possessed by man. Cato, who laboured unsuccessfully to preserve the freedom of his country, was probably no happier than Cæsar who overturned it: And there is little doubt, that a profligate, possessed of health and thoughtless vivacity, is as happy a being as a Newton, embracing the universe in his sublime conception; and is far happier than the virtuous elder Brutus, when avenging his country of the crimes of his own children. It is no good answer to this, to say, that the happiness of the latter is of a higher kind than that of the former. We cannot be more than fully blest. The minds of

men differ widely in point of intellectual worth and accomplishments; but they differ little in point of happiness. A happy child does not enjoy less pleasure than a happy man; and a happy fool is as blessed as a happy philosopher. Activity and self-approbation, which constitute our best and most steady pleasures, are enjoyed in perfection even by children; because children are never at rest: And as every object is new to them, they are continually learning something; and are therefore continually improving their minds. If a man could be always active, and always discovering new truths, he might hope to be as happy as a child; but he could not be happier: for children take as much pleasure in exertion as he can do; and they are as much delighted with themselves and their discoveries, as he can possibly be with himself and his discoveries. It is not possible, however, for a man of mature age to be as happy as a child. He is no longer surrounded by a world filled with novelties. He cannot make discoveries of new truths at every step. Hence his activity must gradually diminish; and his progress in improvement must become more slow. At mature age, therefore, we can no longer enjoy, so frequently, some of the best pleasures; I mean those which arise from activity and from self-applause. But let us not envy the little children on this account. If they

have many pleasures, they have also many vexations. If our pleasures are fewer, we possess greater self-command, which prevents our giving way so readily to uneasiness. Thus there is a compensation of good and of evil in all the situations and ages of life. A certain portion of happiness is given to us by nature ; and that portion we cannot greatly augment.

The contrary of all this takes place with regard to the perfection of our intellectual character. It is not bestowed, but may be gradually acquired. We are all born equally ignorant, and equally feeble. Some do indeed appear to possess more quickness of apprehension than others ; but this inequality is easily rectified by superior industry : And those men never fail to attain to the highest degrees of intellectual excellence, who pursue it steadily, and make it most completely the business of their lives. An infant has none of it. A man always has a portion of it ; and he is always capable of acquiring more of it than he actually possesses ; for there is no end of the degrees in which it may be attained.

This being the true state of things, it is evident that happiness cannot, in this world, be justly regarded as a rational object of pursuit, as it must always be pursued in vain. The great error with regard to it consists in supposing that it can be attained, or that it can be increased, by our

efforts, and in forgetting that it cannot be purchased by a price ; that wherever it comes, it comes as a gift from heaven ; and that our nature cannot rise by industry to the possession of *higher degrees of it*. But an excellent or improved mind is never given : It is always purchased ; and the progress we are capable of making in it is unbounded.

2d, On considering this world attentively, it does not appear to me, that its Contriver and Author ever intended that we should enjoy happiness in it. To understand this clearly, we must take a view of the actual state of the universe around us. If the Author of the universe has formed all things precisely in the way that would contribute most completely to render us happy, and has cautiously avoided whatever would render us otherwise ; then there is no doubt, that to produce our felicity was the great object which He had in view at our creation ; and we cannot go far wrong if we pursue what Supreme Wisdom is pursuing ; indeed we must unavoidably err if we do otherwise. But, on the contrary, if we shall find that this world is not formed to render us happy, but that it is accurately and skilfully contrived for improving our intellectual nature ; it will then follow that this is the object for which we were created ; and consequently, that our Creator points out this as our most valuable pursuit ; and as an object

which, if we do not attain, he will have formed us in vain.

The very form of our world is hostile to the idea, that its Author created it for the purpose of producing happiness to the human race : Else why are vast regions near the poles rendered uninhabitable by cold ? or why are burning deserts produced in the middle regions, or a too rapid luxuriance of vegetation, which is still more pernicious to life ? In what are called the temperate climates, why is one half of the year spent in anxiously and laboriously accumulating food to support existence during the sterility of a long winter ? Why is the face of the earth covered with rugged mountains ; and these mountains made the nurseries of poisonous plants and the dens of savage beasts ? Why is the land divided by stormy oceans ; and these oceans filled with devouring animals ? Why are we brought into the world with pain ; and while we remain in it, exposed to destruction by so many thousand causes ? Of what use is the the endless variety of diseases with which we are assaulted, which we little know how to avoid, much less how to cure, and scarcely how to palliate ? Why are the affairs of this world so arranged, that by war, by shipwreck, or by unfriendly climates, the lives and the welfare of thousands are daily sacrificed with a degree of apparent wantonness, which would lead us to



suppose that *they are of no importance in the eyes either of God or man?*—*If this be our situation*, after reason has done so much for us, we may, without rashness, believe that the earlier state of the world was much worse. The first men were continually exposed to be devoured by wild beasts; they were swept away by pestilence; they perished by famine; or they kept each other in constant alarm by barbarous animosities. In our present improved state of civilization, we have not yet obtained much to boast of in point of felicity. Every man must no doubt, on this head, judge for himself, and will estimate the world and its enjoyments as he has seen or found them; but, in general, it is a state of toil and of care. They who attempt to render it any thing else, and to enjoy a life of uninterrupted pleasure, soon find that they are struggling against nature; and it is well if they create not to themselves more misery than they wished to avoid. A long train of painful distempers derive their origin from pursuing without restraint the pleasures which our senses seem to offer to us. The pleasures of affection are the most approved, and not the least powerful that our existence affords; yet they certainly do, in a great measure, operate as snares to betray us into anxieties which we might otherwise have escaped. The calamities of those who are dear to us become our own; and

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a very affectionate mind is necessarily a source of disquietude, in consequence of the condition upon which every human connection is formed, that it must one day be dissolved by a sure, but doubtful, period of mortality. Even the pleasures of science are purchased by much anxious labour, and often at the expence of health, or at least of that gaiety of spirit which is the source of the highest pleasure. In short, it seems very clear that we never were intended to enjoy any high degree of happiness in this world; and that if life were only valuable on account of the pleasures it bestows, a wise man, who had balanced well its pains and its joys, would be so far from regarding it as a state of existence contrived to produce felicity, that he would scarcely account it a gift worth accepting.

The idea, however, that the world was formed merely for the purpose of bestowing happiness upon man, its noblest inhabitant, is very ancient, and has been very generally received. It is highly flattering to human vanity, and presents the character of the Maker of the universe in the point of view in which we are most willing to consider it. But this most important objection to it was very early perceived: How comes it to pass, that pain and misery have found their way into a world that was contrived for no other purpose than that of conferring

happiness? This question, concerning the origin of physical evil, or of suffering, has in all ages perplexed mankind\*. It becomes more puzzling, when it is recollected that enjoyments and sufferings are not conferred according to any rules of justice; for the best men are often extremely unfortunate, and even unhappy. To get quit of this difficulty, the ancient Persians asserted that there are two gods, the one good, and the other evil; that the good being created man, and wishes to render him happy, but that he is not able to protect us entirely against the efforts of the evil being. The story among the Greeks, of the box of Pandora, from which, when it was opened, all the evils which now exist flew out, is a contrivance of the same kind; and our European ancestors very sagely ascribed all the mischief that occurred in their times to the Devil, and his associates the witches.

But the mode in which men have most generally attempted to reconcile the existence of physical evil, or suffering in the world, with the supposed purpose of its creation, is this: They have added a second supposition to the first. They confess that, by some cross accident, the Author of Nature has not succeeded in His benevolent plan of producing happiness in this

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See Appendix at the end of this Chapter.

world ; but they allege that He will certainly produce another world, or a future state of existence, after this shall have terminated, in which every error will be rectified ; those who now are the disturbers of human happiness will be punished, and the rest will enjoy perfect felicity.

It must be obvious, however, that this account of matters is very unsatisfactory. We know the Author of Nature only from His works ; and if He has not succeeded in the plan upon which He formed this world, it is evident that He may fail in the plan of making a better world.

But, on the contrary, if we consider this world as formed, not to confer felicity, but to train up beings to intellectual energy and excellence, every difficulty vanishes ; the propriety of our situation becomes obvious ; and the works of the Author of Nature appear complete and perfect. Considered in this point of view, care and toil are no evils, as they are justly numbered among the best means of moral improvement. The cold and the sterility of the polar regions, the burning heat of the tropical sun, the dry desert, the rugged mountain, and the devouring ocean, are valuable engines for calling forth the intrepidity, the perseverance, the skill, the foresight, and all the best energies of the human mind. The severities of a long and barren winter compel us to study the course of the seasons,

*and give rise to all the arts connected with subsistence or accommodation. Poisonous plants teach us caution, and afford the best materials of the healing art. The fierceness of wild beasts, the fury of war or of pestilence, and all the evils that befall humanity, are only so many proofs that the Author of our nature prefers our intellectual improvement to our happiness.*

The whole error upon the subject appears to have arisen from mistaking the means which Nature employs for the ends or purposes which she designs to accomplish. In every work of art, the end or object which the artist has in view is distinguished by its superior permanence and stability from the temporary means which he uses for its production. When the house is finished, and the scaffolding taken down, we can easily perceive that the scaffolding was erected for the house, and not the house for the scaffolding. The pain of hunger or thirst, and the pleasure of eating and drinking, are both at an end as soon as we have gratified those appetites; but the health and vigour which arise from proper nourishment remain. Hence a rational being can easily perceive that hunger is not given for our torment, nor is the pleasure of eating bestowed as a source of happiness: They are only given as the means of preserving our constitution in a sound state. The same rule obtains with regard to all our enjoyments. We

*are led to exertion by the hope of pleasure; but the pleasure we receive terminates with the exertion, although the improvement which it produces remains and is permanent.* For, in all human efforts, whether speculative or active, two things take place; a certain degree of contrivance and of vigour is exerted; and a certain degree of pleasure or of uneasiness is felt. If the effort is frequently repeated, we learn to perform it with greater ease; if it is a bodily effort of a moderate kind, our strength is increased in consequence of it; and if it is an effort of thought, the frequent repetition of it augments our ingenuity and vigour of mind. The case is directly the reverse with regard to the pleasure or the pain which our exertions produce. Activity is usually pleasing; but every repetition of a particular exertion diminishes the pleasure or the pain which it originally produced, till at last they are scarcely, if at all, perceived. Thus our exertions produce pleasure, but a pleasure which is continually diminishing; and at the same time they produce improvement, but an improvement which is continually increasing.

We ought to regard the Contriver of our constitution, therefore, neither as a malevolent being who has devised a system of misery, nor as a being who wishes to produce mere pleasure or felicity for its own sake; but as a skilful artist, who delights in the diffusion of mind through

the universe, and who has contrived this world for the purpose of training up men to the possession of intelligence. Pleasure and pain seem to be almost equal in his eyes, and to be used indifferently, as they best promote his grand purpose of creating energy of character. Excessive pleasure subdues the mind, and weakens its vigour in a greater degree than excessive pain. Accordingly, care is taken that excessive pain shall more frequently exist in nature than excessive pleasure. At the same time, it is evident that the Author of our nature has no design to distress us unnecessarily; for the ordinary state of our existence is agreeable upon the whole, and our constitution is so contrived, that we shall never long endure intolerable misery, as it soon destroys life and suffering together. To train us up gradually to become vigorous and enlightened beings, it was necessary that we should be induced to encounter and to contend against the greatest possible variety of difficulties and of evils. The human mind is, therefore, placed amidst just as much happiness as is necessary to raise it above despondency, and to encourage it to perform with vigour its appointed business; while, at the same time, the anxieties and labours it is destined to encounter, are usually so proportioned to its strength, as neither to subdue it by their severity, nor suffer it to fall asleep by relaxation. The pleasures of life are

thus only held out <sup>as</sup> allurements to engage us in more severe labours. The passion which unites the sexes, for example, is, no doubt, very pleasing. Its delightful hopes and fears have, in every age, formed the favourite subject of the poet's song: yet we know to what serious situations it leads, and how much anxiety and toil the greater number of men and women undergo for the sake of their families. It is thus that the Maker of the Universe employs every circumstance in our situation to lead us to the exertion, and consequently to the improvement, of our faculties. Our passions, our miseries, our wants, our fears, our pleasures, and the very structure and revolutions of the globe which we inhabit, are all made subservient to this great end. We may, therefore, safely conclude, that for this purpose we were created, and placed in this world, that we might gradually become more excellent and more perfect beings; and that to produce this intellectual improvement or excellence in ourselves ought to be the great business of our lives.

II. But the Author of this world has so contrived the general system, that no part of it is formed for itself alone. The grass and the trees grow not for themselves; they are the food and the shelter of tribes of animals. These animals, however, do not live and grow for



themselves; they are, in their turn, the food of other animals, which would perish, did they not find living prey to devour. It is not for himself alone that the horse possesses swiftness and strength; neither is it merely for his own benefit that the sheep is covered with wool. All the parts of nature are formed as parts of a whole; and every part has a reference to some other part. Man is not exempted from this general rule. The male and the female are obviously formed for each other, and both of them for posterity, and that posterity for a future posterity without end. Thus are we connected, and induced to labour for each other, while the uncertainty of our existence renders us continually sensible that we are doing so. We are under the necessity of providing for subsistence and accommodation during a life of threescore and ten years; but we are never sure that we may not die before to-morrow. Thus are we compelled to build, that others may be sheltered. We must sow the seed, though we know that another may reap the harvest; and we accumulate treasures to be enjoyed by others. Even the dinner for to-day, which we have already prepared, may be eaten by another. Thus a man in society is like a stone in a wall, of little value, excepting in so far as he gives or receives support. In this light the Architect of the universe beholds us: and could we see ourselves in

the same point of view that He<sup>d</sup> does, that is, with unbounded intelligence, and in relation to the universe, we too would regard ourselves and our labours in the same light; and as then most valuable, when our influence is highest in producing the welfare of others, and enabling them to fulfil the purpose of their existence.

1st. But if we are to labour for the welfare of others, it is in vain that we labour to produce their felicity. *That* is not left to be bestowed by man; a certain portion of it is given by nature. We may diminish that portion, indeed, and contrive to distress each other in a considerable degree; but we can add little to each other's natural happiness of temper or character. Even the mischief that we might do is guarded against by nature, partly by rendering individuals formidable to each other, and partly by the effect of habit and of time, in gradually spreading the healing balsam of oblivion over all human sorrows.

Proud and powerful men have sometimes supposed that the happiness of mankind depended upon them, and that they, by their skill, could rear a splendid fabric of human felicity. But they have never failed to do harm. Their laws to promote population and marriages have depopulated their territories; their laws to encourage industry have proved restraints upon commercial activity; and the laws by which

they meant to produce plenty have discouraged agriculture. It has, at last, been found, that in what concerns external prosperity, and the abundance of the comforts of life, Nature must be left to herself; and that the wisest conduct which statesmen, and the rulers of the world, can adopt, is to produce no mischief by their ill-judged interference.

The case is very different with regard to the improvement of our intellectual nature; for in that we may labour for each other with good hopes of success. We daily see the difference which education produces upon men: But the superiority which the well-informed possess over others, is often to be considered rather as the merit of their teachers than of themselves. The contriver of a system of superstition diffuses darkness and folly over half the human race for ages. The author of a system of truth may, in the same manner, diffuse reason and wisdom widely in the world. Men are, indeed, at all times, so closely connected in society, that their influence in the formation of each other's characters cannot avoid being very great; and the intercourse of minds, by the invention of printing, is now rendered so easy, that almost every man, possessed of leisure and of respectable talents may exert himself successfully for the improvement of a great portion of his contemporaries at least.

2d. Neither ought our exertions for the im-

provement of others to be regarded as altogether gratuitous, or unnecessary to our own advancement in intellectual excellence. The progress of the human mind is abundantly slow; but it would be still slower, or rather it would never take place, were every man to labour for himself as a solitary individual. A few unconnected remarks upon some scattered objects would be the utmost height at which any science would arrive. Unprotected and weak, because alone, instead of the master of the inferior creation, man would be a timid and feeble animal, destitute both of art and vigour. It is by the communication of observations that science is formed; it is by a combination of efforts that arts exist; and it is by acting among his equals, and taking a share in their enterprises, that man discovers and improves his powers. Little improvement, however, can be made in the society of ignorant and uncultivated men. To advance ourselves, we must prevail with others to do the same, that an adequate field may be provided for our exertions, and that fellow-labourers may be obtained in our extensive occupation. Enlightened and accomplished men are formed by the society of each other, or by a communication of thoughts and discoveries. While we labour to teach others, we adopt the surest means for bringing our own knowledge to perfection and our faculties to maturity. Even for his own sake, there-

fore, every individual ought to instruct the rest of mankind, and to prevail with as many of them as possible to engage in the great business of intellectual improvement.

3d. As a farther inducement to this kind of exertion, let it be remembered, that of all the objects which the universe contains, Mind is the most excellent. To endeavour to produce highly improved minds, is, therefore, the most excellent employment of human industry. To make a porcelain jar or a vessel of chrystal, is a more valuable effort than to make a brown pitcher or a wooden dish; but to produce wisdom, or to convert ignorant and weak into enlightened and energetic beings, is not only a more valuable exertion than any of these, but it is a true creation of what is most valuable in the universe. Compared to his illustrious labour, which appears to be the occupation of God, and a task which He accounts worthy of his providence, all other cares diminish into folly.

The great business or employment, therefore, which Nature points out for man in this world, and which ought to be the ultimate object of his pursuit, is twofold; to labour to promote the intellectual improvement or excellence of his own character as an individual, and to endeavour to produce the same worth or excellence in the characters of other men. The one of these cannot be successfully performed without the other;

and when united, they form the most important pursuit in which a rational being can occupy his faculties.

AFTER all, however, it must be confessed, that the view now given of the object on account of which the human race were created, and of the business in which they ought to be occupied, is not without difficulties. The most obvious of these is that which results from the prepossession of the human mind in favour of pleasure, and from the difficulty of imagining any other object, which a being of boundless power and intelligence could propose to himself in the creation of the universe, than that of diffusing felicity. In the pursuit of truth, however, it is our duty to disregard every such prepossession or prejudice. It is certain that this world is not formed for the direct and immediate purpose of conferring felicity; and that the pursuit of this object is not pointed out to its inhabitants as their proper business. It is to be observed, however, that I have here stated what I account the great Law of Morality, or the regulating principle of human conduct, only in a general and rather popular manner. A part of the difficulty now alluded to will vanish, when the consequences of the general doctrine here maintained come to be considered in detail, that is, when it shall be made to appear that the pursuit and the acqui-

sition of intellectual improvement naturally tend to produce a certain measure of felicity; and that there is even reason to suspect, or rather to believe, that the intellectual universe is so constructed, that this pursuit is necessary to the endurance, not merely of enjoyment, but of existence itself.

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## APPENDIX TO CHAPTER FIRST

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### REMARKS ON THE BOOK OF JOB.

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It appears that, in every period of history, speculative men have been extremely perplexed by the difficulty which they found in reconciling the character of boundless benevolence, which they ascribed to the Deity, with the state of suffering, or of physical evil, in which individuals and nations frequently find themselves placed in this world under his government. It is a singular circumstance, that the most ancient book which perhaps exists in the world is a philosophical poem upon this subject, I mean the Book of Job. As the opi-

nion of its being inspired has prevented philosophers and critics from giving to it that attention to which it is entitled from its poetical merit, its high antiquity, and the importance of the reasonings which it contains, I shall here shortly state its contents, and the principle which it is written to illustrate.

The Book of Job is a dramatic poem. The speakers in it are six in number, viz. Job himself, three old men, his friends, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, and a young man, his friend, called Elihu: last of all, God himself is introduced as a character in this drama. The plot, or story, is simple. Job, the hero of the piece, a man of great, or rather perfect virtue, suffers almost every human calamity. His children are destroyed, his property is lost, and he himself falls into bad health. In this situation his three aged friends and his young friend come to comfort him. The subject of their conversation is the celebrated question concerning the origin of the evils and sufferings which men endure in this world, and whether they do not afford a good reason for impeaching the justice of divine providence?

Job begins the dialogue, by complaining of the hardship of his situation, and by cursing the day of his birth, and his birth itself as a calamity. He is answered by his aged friend Eliphaz, who tells him, that the evils he endures



are inflicted by Providence, as the punishment of his sins. Job, in reply, justifies his complaint against Providence, and asserts the integrity of his past life. He is answered by another of his friends in the same strain with the former. Job replies as before; and thus the dialogue proceeds, till each of the old men has spoken twice, and two of them have spoken three times, Job always replying to each of them. They continue to assert, that the evils of life are inflicted as the punishment of guilt; and therefore conclude that Job must have been a great sinner. Job, on the contrary, persists in defending the uprightness of his own character, and in alleging that he suffers unjustly. His last speech is a long one; and notwithstanding the lapse of ages, and the difference of our manners from those to which he alludes, his description of his former prosperity, of the integrity of his conduct, and of the reverse of fortune which he had experienced, is truly interesting. “ When “ I went out to the gate, through the city, when “ I prepared my seat in the street, the young “ men saw me, and hid themselves; and the “ aged arose, and stood up. The princes re- “ frained talking, and laid their hand on “ their mouth. The nobles held their peace, “ and their tongue cleaved to the roof of “ their mouth. When the ear heard me, “ then it blessed me; and when the eye saw

“ me, it gave witness to me: because I delivered  
“ the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and  
“ him that had none to help him. The blessing  
“ of him that was ready to perish came upon  
“ me: and I caused the widow’s heart to sing  
“ for joy. I put on righteousness, and it clothed  
“ me: my judgment was as a robe and a dia-  
“ dem. I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I  
“ to the lame. I was a father to the poor: and  
“ the cause which I knew not, I searched out. I  
“ brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked  
“ the spoil out of his teeth. Then I said, I shall  
“ die in my nest, and I shall multiply my days as  
“ the sand. My root was spread out by the  
“ waters, and the dew lay all night upon my  
“ branch. My glory was fresh in me, and my  
“ bow was renewed in my hand. Unto me  
“ men gave ear, and waited, and kept silence at  
“ my counsel. After my words they spake not  
“ again.”—“ But now they that are younger  
“ than I, have me in derision, whose fathers I  
“ would have disdained to have set with the  
“ dogs of my flock.” Towards the end of this  
speech, Job challenges heaven itself to accuse  
him: “ O that one would hear me! that the Al-  
“ mighty would answer me!”

Job’s three aged friends at length relinquish  
the vain attempt to convince him that he suffers  
for his sins, and hold their peace. Upon this  
his young friend Elihu, who had hitherto pre-

served a respectful silence, takes up the subject upon a different ground. He does not allege that the evils of life are inflicted as punishments, nor does he at all pretend to explain the cause of them; but he asserts that we are not entitled to accuse Providence of injustice on their account, seeing we know so little of its ways, and are altogether ignorant of the nature and character of the maker of the world. After Elihu has proceeded to a considerable length in his discourse, and has demonstrated our ignorance of the intentions of Providence, and the impropriety of attempting to censure an administration which we do not understand, God himself speaks from a whirlwind. He adopts the argument of Elihu; and in a style of rapid interrogation, which is highly poetical, enumerates a great variety of the wonders that exist in nature, and demands of Job whether he understands, or can explain them?

The result of the whole is, that Job acknowledges his error in having censured that Providence whose mode of government he does not comprehend. God is angry with Job's three friends for having found no better solution of his difficulties, and commands them to offer sacrifice, and solicit the prayers of Job in their favour; but Elihu is not censured, because his argument was correct. Job's fortunes are all repaired, and he ends his days in great prosperity.

It is to be observed, that at the beginning of the book, a story in prose, of a very mythological and suspicious aspect, is introduced, which is altogether inconsistent with the general purpose of the poem. The poem endeavours to prove, that the sufferings of a just man like Job are altogether inexplicable, in consequence of our ignorance of the designs of Providence; but that this ignorance ought to prevent our accusing the author of the world of injustice; whereas the two prose chapters explain the cause of Job's sufferings very clearly, by representing them as having arisen from a dispute between God and the Devil, in which God defied the Devil to tempt Job to sin. The Devil accepted the challenge, on condition of being allowed to torment Job as much as he pleased. The Devil was unsuccessful; for although Job doubted the justice and the wisdom of divine Providence (which he had some reason for doing, if this story was true), yet he still retained his piety and resignation. From the inconsistency between this introductory piece of history and the sublime sentiments contained in the rest of the work, we may well doubt the authenticity, of a part at least, of the two first chapters of the Book of Job, and suspect that the Christian clergy have acted very rashly in receiving them into the canon of the sacred scriptures.

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## CHAP. II.

### OF THE QUALITIES WHICH CONSTITUTE MORAL PERFECTION.

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HAVING said so much about the improvement and the perfection of our intellectual nature, I think it necessary to state particularly what I regard as the qualities which constitute this perfection.

The energies which exist and act in the human form are of two kinds ; voluntary and involuntary. Our involuntary powers or energies are those employed in conveying the blood round our bodies, in digesting and circulating the aliment, in performing the various secretions and excretions required by our constitution, in enlarging or diminishing the cavity of the chest for the purpose of breathing, and in other efforts necessary to life and health, which proceed without any choice on our part.

Our voluntary powers, on the contrary, are those which are exerted in consequence of an act of will : As when we exert ourselves in judging, in contriving, in resisting pain or pleasure, or in moving our bodies.

Although the subject has not been sufficiently investigated to authorise our forming a decisive opinion upon it, yet it appears extremely probable, that the same energy by which we judge and act also carries on the involuntary movements of our constitution. Nay, it is very possible that the greater number of these movements are originally voluntary ; although, by the effect of habit, they at last proceed without any consciousness of an effort on our part. But however this may be, it is to be remarked, that our voluntary powers are the only part of our constitution, in the regulation of which morality is concerned. A certain portion of corporeal perfection, that is, of health, is no doubt necessary to every intellectual effort. But this we cannot confer upon ourselves. Health and bodily vigour grow up to maturity within us without our contrivance ; and after a certain period they irresistibly decline and pass away. Every man's business, with regard to them in his own person, consists chiefly in doing no harm to his health, and in avoiding unnecessary exposure to hazard ; for beyond this our cares can be of little service, and it is absurd to vex ourselves in vain.

Intellectual excellence, or the perfection of the human mind, consists of the two following qualities : First, Of a capacity to think, or to judge

clearly ; and, secondly, Of a capacity to act vigorously.

The first of these qualities is usually called Intelligence or Wisdom. In an extensive sense, it implies, when ascribed to an individual, that he has cultivated his rational faculties ; that he possesses a speculative knowledge of himself, and of his situation in this world ; that he has learned to judge with accuracy of the constitution of Nature, and of the course of those events that occur around us ; that he knows the consequences and the advantages to be derived from them ; and that he discerns, in ordinary life, the kind of conduct which is worthy of preference, and that which ought to be rejected and avoided. We are born destitute of this quality ; because we are born ignorant. It is produced by exerting that original energy or capacity for acquiring intelligence, which the Author of our constitution has bestowed as the groundwork of our rational nature. The possession of it confers a degree of obvious excellence and dignity, which all human beings, and even the brute creation, seem disposed to respect.

The second branch of intellectual perfection is known by the appellation of self-command, or energy of mind or fortitude. It consists of such a degree of power over our own feelings, of firmness or strength of mind, as enables

us to execute with vigour whatever wisdom directs. It is in vain that we know what is right, if fear, indolence, love, hatred, or any partiality, or any weakness, render us incapable of doing what reason requires to be accomplished, or of suffering what it commands us to undergo. Fortitude, or that energy which enables the mind to command all its feelings, and to bend its whole powers towards a particular effort, is necessary to the acquisition even of wisdom itself: for valuable knowledge is not to be attained, nor the human understanding highly improved, without much patient investigation; abstaining from many pleasures, and struggling against many prejudices, which must render the first part, at least, of the progress often hard and unpleasing.

Wisdom, then, or skill to discern proper objects of pursuit, and proper means of pursuing them, together with fortitude, or vigour to pursue these objects with steadfastness, form the two great branches of human excellence. Neither does it appear that any quality or accomplishment, besides these two, can be necessary to form a perfect being: For to know and to do, on all occasions, what is perfectly rational and wise, is to be perfect.

By the terms *wisdom* and *perfection*, however, as an object of human pursuit, I do not mean any visionary state of absolute wisdom or



absolute perfection, which is to lift mankind above their proper sphere, or alter the ordinary arrangements of social life. It is not excellence, but a gradual and natural progress in excellence, that is the perfection of man. He who is advancing in this progress is not indeed absolutely perfect, for he is not a god ; but he possesses relative perfection. He is what the Author of his nature intended him to be ; and for that reason he is good and perfect in the place which he holds in the universe. That place, with respect to himself, may and ought to be continually changing ; for he ought to be advancing steadily higher. But in the eyes of a being who can discern effects in their causes, and foresee the end from knowing the beginning, every part of his existence is beautiful and right ; and he is equally, in every part of it, an object of approbation. If the acorn had never budded, the pride of the forest would have failed ; for the oak would never have reared its stately form. The contrivances and the sports of children, by which the mind puts forth its first powers, and tastes the pleasures of exertion, are as necessary and as valuable a part of the order of nature, and of our intellectual progress, as the more profound schemes, the hazardous enterprises, and the solemn business of our maturer years.

Perhaps even this simple division of intellec-

tual perfection into wisdom and fortitude was unnecessary. Wisdom alone, or an enlightened understanding, might be understood to include all excellence ; as self-command or fortitude means nothing more than wisdom carried into action. A clear discernment of what is good from what is evil, of what is valuable from what is worthless, of what is rational from what is absurd, naturally produces an effort to pursue the one and to avoid the other. Accordingly, when a man is irresolute and wavering in his conduct, it is because his reason hesitates, and his judgment is undecided. He is distracted by contending passions or opposite interests ; which, if they do not blind his rational perceptions, yet throw such a mist before them, as prevents his discerning his true situation with that clearness and certainty which is necessary to firmness and determination of mind. A man of an intrepid and vigorous character, on the contrary, is a man who discerns, or imagines he discerns, clearly and decisively what is fittest to be done. Thus the character of the understanding justly fixes the character of the conduct ; and that conduct is the best which exhibits the highest degree of vigorous intelligence, or of wisdom embodied into action.

I may here consider for a moment the disputed point, how far great virtue is necessarily connected with great talents or ability ?

The word *virtue* has an ambiguous signification. In general, however, it means excellence, or rather that kind of excellence which is most highly valued. Among the Greeks and Romans, it signified courage or intrepidity in military enterprises; among the modern Italians, it means taste; applied to women, it has been used to signify the single virtue of chastity; and among the poor in this country, in former times, it meant frugality. By modern philosophers or moralists, the word *virtue* has been very generally employed to signify good intention, or an attempt to do what is right. This explanation has arisen from considering mankind as acting under certain laws prescribed either by society or by the Author of their existence. By the laws of civilized nations, nobody can be punished who does not positively intend to violate the law; and hence it has come to be supposed, that to mean or intend well is virtue.

These notions have all arisen from a defective idea of what constitutes the perfection of the human mind. Courage, good taste, chastity, frugality, and an honest intention, are all good qualities; but taken separately, they do not constitute excellence or worth. A brave man may be a robber; a man of good taste may be a cheat; a chaste woman may be prodigal; and a frugal woman may be immodest; a well-meaning man may be very weak; and

a man of resolution may entertain very bad purposes.

It is chiefly in consequence of the mischief that persons called men of talents often do in the world, that virtue and ability have come to be considered as distinct qualities. But the perfection of our nature, as already stated, consists of two things ; wisdom, and self-command or fortitude. If a man possess wisdom, which enables him to discern what is good and fit to be done, he is so far a virtuous or excellent being ; but if he want self-command, that is, if he is led away by his passions, and want resolution to do what he approves, he is so far a defective being, and destitute of excellence or virtue. Wisdom also consists of two branches ; a man may discern clearly what ought to be the proper object of human pursuit, and he may seriously wish to promote the improvement of himself and others. So far he is a wise, a virtuous, and a well-intentioned man ; but if he want discernment or skill to perceive the proper and adequate means of attaining to the great object of which he approves, he is so far destitute of wisdom ; and consequently he so far wants worth or virtue. He may even do much mischief by ill-judged efforts in support of a good cause. On the contrary, a man may be very skilful and dexterous in devising the best means for accomplishing his designs ; and to this extent he unquestionably

possesses wisdom or virtue; and excellence of nature : but if he is the slave of his passions, and blinded by them, and pursue what is not truly valuable, he is so far destitute of worth ; his mind is irrational, for it approves of what is not worthy of approbation, and the labour of his life can produce nothing valuable.

When the words *virtuous*, *good*, and *right*, then, are hereafter applied in this Work to human actions, I wish them to be thus understood : That action is virtuous, and good, and right, which is well adapted to increase the intellectual perfection of our nature, or to augment the quantity of wisdom and of self-command that exist in the world ; whereas that action is vicious, evil, and wrong, which has a tendency to render our nature imperfect, by producing ignorance, error, and weakness ; or which has a tendency to diminish the quantity of improved mind or intellect that is to be found among men. In other words, I understand virtue to mean intellectual excellence ; and that an action is virtuous when it is productive of this excellence.

The word *duty* may also here be taken notice of, as it is often applied to human actions. It means, in common language, any service that is due, or that ought to be performed by an inferior to his superior. It is borrowed from religion, and proceeds upon the supposition that

we ought to acquire all virtue as a service due to God. When the word hereafter occurs, it will be used as synonymous with virtue, or to express what reason or what wisdom requires us to perform. This remark is only made for the sake of precision, as the common acceptance of the word *duty* is far from being erroneous; for reason is a law given by the Author of this world for the regulation of our actions; and to obey reason is to obey Him.

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### CHAP. III.

#### OF FORMER SYSTEMS OF MORALITY.

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THE ancient philosophers, as already remarked, considered happiness as the ultimate object of human pursuit. Their systems of morality, therefore, were so many devices for enabling men to attain to this end in the most successful manner.

The Epicureans asserted, that happiness was best found in ease and sensual pleasure; and therefore that men ought to direct their whole efforts towards the attainment of these objects. But the followers of Plato, Aristotle, and Zeno,

alleged that happiness is best found by acting rationally, or according to propriety. Hence they represented propriety of conduct as the great rule of morality.

The Platonists contended, that the human mind or character consists of three parts, and that virtue consists in acting upon the principle of justice towards each of these parts. The first part consists of the more vehement passions, such as ambition, pride, or revenge. The second consists of passions founded on the love of pleasure, such as the bodily appetites and the love of ease. The third and most excellent part of our constitution is the reason or understanding. They asserted, that human conduct is only to be regarded as proper when the two orders of passions are exerted in their due degrees under the dominion of reason; when pride leads us to act with intrepidity, but not with rashness; and when the love of ease leads us to caution, but not to cowardice. A man of a sound judgment, acting in this balanced and rational manner, was said by them to live according to propriety or justice.

Aristotle makes the great rule of morality to consist of habitual moderation of conduct. Virtue, said he, consists in a middle course; for all extremes are faulty or vicious: courage is the middle point between rashness and cowardice: frugality stands between avarice and profusion:

and magnanimity between arrogance and pusillanimity. Aristotle differed from Plato chiefly in this, that he insisted greatly upon the importance of good habits of conduct; whereas Plato entertained a higher idea of the importance of wise and rational opinions upon all subjects.

The Stoics entertained very sublime conceptions of the perfection to which it is possible for man to rise in this world; and the rules of conduct laid down by them are, with very few exceptions, extremely excellent. They directed men to seek felicity, not in the success of their wishes and efforts, but in the part which they acted, and the manner in which they conducted themselves. "Life," said they, "is a theatrical exhibition: It is of no importance whether you represent a king or a beggar, providing you play your part beautifully and well." Upon this principle they recommended the most patient acquiescence in the will of Providence, or the order of nature, as the highest wisdom. "If you are the commander of an army," said they, "do your duty with attention and fidelity. If you are successful, it is well; if unsuccessful, it is equally well. The gods required you to do your duty, and you have done it with applause. The success or the failure of your efforts are nothing to you; for these the gods had reserved in their own hands." "A man who acts thus," said the



Stoics, " can never be disappointed or unhappy ;  
" for he disregards the events of life as matters  
" over which he has no controul ; his felicity  
" consists in his own conduct and sentiments,  
" which he can always command."

As the ancient philosophers represented the pursuit of happiness as the proper business of man in this world, they could not deny the propriety of self-slaughter, when committed by the unhappy. The Stoics highly approved of the practice, as the happy means of escaping from all the evils of life : and it is a singular circumstance, that no ancient writer, either among the Greeks, the Romans, or the Jews, has expressed any disapprobation of it.

In modern times, several attempts have been made to fix upon some general principle or rule of moral conduct. Dr. Clark, for example, asserts, that the great rule of morality consists in acting according to the relations of things ; or the fitness of applying certain actions to certain things, or relations of things. Woolaston alleges, that we ought to act according to truth, or the true nature of things, considered as they are, and not as they are not ; that is to say, we ought to treat our kindred, not as strangers, which they are not, but as our kindred, which they actually are. Shaftesbury maintains, like the Platonists, that the great principle of morality consists in preserving a proper balance among all our affections ; so that none of them may exert greater influence

than of right belongs to it. An ingenious author, William Godwin, has lately attempted to found a system of morality upon this principle, that in our whole conduct we ought to act towards ourselves and others according to strict justice, and that we ought to perform towards every man precisely what is due to him.

These systems are all erroneous in two points of view. So far as they represent happiness as the proper object of human pursuit, they send us upon a vain chase to catch a rainbow that retires as we advance: So far as they represent propriety or reasonableness of conduct as the great rule of moral action, they are defective, inasmuch as they afford no precise measure by which this propriety or reasonableness can be judged of.

Propriety, utility, fitness, truth, or justice, can never be the foundation of a system of morality, or become objects of pursuit; because they are nothing in themselves, being merely relative terms, which allude to something else. That conduct is proper, useful, or fit, which is proper, useful, or fit for producing some effect. The effect, then, is the important object to be pursued, and not the utility, fitness, or propriety, which mean nothing in themselves. Even the word truth expresses no real object, and only refers in general to the actual past, present, or future state of the objects which the universe

contains. Justice, in the same manner, always refers to something else. It consists of a willingness to give every man his due. But though it were granted that we ought to act justly, the question would still return, What is that which we ought to regard as justly due, or to be performed by us to every man?

The systems of these modern authors, therefore, are altogether defective, as they afford us no standard or measure of propriety, fitness, truth, or justice. There can be no doubt that we ought to act properly, fitly, usefully, righteously, and in a manner agreeable to our situation; but how shall it be known that we are doing so? These authors do not resolve the difficulty; and it can only be resolved by the great principle, that whatever increases the intellectual excellence of our nature, is proper, and fit, and useful, and just.

Dr Hutcheson represents Benevolence as the great moral law or rule of conduct; and Dr Adam Smith represents Sympathy in the same light. These opinions will be afterwards noticed when I come to treat of the benevolent affections; but, in the mean time, it may be proper to remark, that neither benevolence nor sympathy, nor any other involuntary feeling, can ever be justly regarded as a rule of conduct; for these feelings require themselves to be trained and set right by reason in a thousand instances;

and that can never be an ultimate object of pursuit, and a supreme rule of action, which itself requires to be ruled and directed by something else.

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## CHAP. IV.

## DIVISION OF MORAL DUTIES.

I HAVE said that Moral Science consists of two branches ; first, of the chief end or object which we ought to pursue ; and, secondly, of the means of pursuing that object with success. I have stated, that the perfection, or rather the improvement, of our rational nature, is the great business and ultimate object which men ought to pursue in this world. I next proceed to consider the means of improving the human mind. These means constitute the duties of life. That is a duty which has a tendency to improve our intellectual character ; and that is not a duty which does not tend to produce such improvement.

Human actions may be performed with a view to three objects : ourselves ; the Author of

our existence; and society. I shall, therefore, divide my discussion of the duties of men into three branches; which will form the three remaining Parts of this work. One Part will contain an investigation of the Private Duties of Men; in another Part, I shall consider the subject of Religion; and, in the last Part, I shall endeavour to state the Public Duties of Men as Members of Society.

Our private duties consist of the various efforts which it is in our power to make for our own improvement as individuals.

A man, as an individual, may improve his mind in two ways; first, by speculation, or the acquisition of knowledge; and, secondly, by action or business.

Men are chiefly induced to engage both in speculation and in action by their appetites, passions, and affections; that is, by the pleasure they receive from certain objects, and the pain they derive from others.

In stating our duty to ourselves as individuals, I shall consider, first, those exertions of the mind by which its speculative powers are most successfully improved, or by which its discernment of truth is best promoted; and, secondly, I shall consider the more remarkable appetites, passions, and affections which excite our nature to activity, and consequently to improvement.

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PART II.  
OF THE PRIVATE DUTIES OF MEN.

CHAP. I.

OF THE HUMAN UNDERSTANDING AND ITS SUBORDINATE FACULTIES.

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It has been usual with metaphysicians, or those who attempt to investigate the qualities of intelligent beings, to consider the human mind as a very complex organ. They represent it as possessed of various faculties, altogether distinct from each other. Thus they consider the understanding, or judgment, as one faculty; the imagination as a different faculty; the powers of taste, for what is beautiful, of moral perception, and of abstraction, as altogether distinct faculties in themselves, and as implanted by nature for different purposes.

Hence a variety of abstruse questions have arisen, which have long perplexed this class of philosophers. It has been said, for example, that the

understanding is given us for the investigation of general truth; but that our moral faculty is bestowed 'for the discovery of that quality in actions in consequence of which they are called right or wrong. Hence it has been accounted a matter of great doubt whether any human actions are truly right or wrong in themselves, *seeing they are not discovered to be so by the understanding, which is the faculty appropriated to the investigation of truth*; and it has been sometimes supposed, that actions only *appear* to us to be right or wrong, in consequence of the peculiar faculty or taste which the Author of nature has thought fit to implant in our constitution during our present existence.

In the same manner, it has been made a question, whether there is in truth any such thing as beauty or deformity in the universe? or whether certain objects only seem beautiful or deformed to us, in consequence of the particular taste with which we have been formed?

As I do not wish to bewilder myself or others by entering unnecessarily into the misty regions of metaphysical controversy, I shall rest satisfied with merely stating what I regard as the actual constitution of the human mind, so far as a statement of that constitution may appear necessary to the 'explanation of the duties of life'; but I shall avoid attempting either an elaborate refutation of the opinions of others, or

even an anxious defence of my own sentiments. If the notions which I have adopted are erroneous, they cannot be too soon refuted, whereas, if they are well founded, they will ultimately support themselves; and the candid consideration of them would be equally injured by the favourable or the hostile prejudice which *an attempt to aid them by eloquence, or by acute disputation, might excite.*

We do not know, and perhaps we do not possess, any means of discovering what that substance is which we call *mind* or *intellect*; neither are we acquainted with the substance or essence of any object in nature. We can only observe the changes that occur within or around us, and describe the appearance or qualities of things. In speaking of the human mind, therefore, I mean to say nothing of its physical constitution, or of the unknown energy or substance that produces those exertions or powers which form its most remarkable qualities. I shall merely attempt to give a correct enumeration and arrangement of these qualities or powers.

The human mind consists of three powers or faculties; Sensation, Memory, and Understanding. The powers of sensation and memory are of a secondary nature, and subordinate to the understanding; or, rather, the understanding alone ought to be regarded as the mind or intellect; memory and sense being merely or-



gans with which it is furnished for the acquisition of knowledge, and the exertion of its powers in its present state.

1st, The senses are of two kinds. By one class of sensations we acquire knowledge; and by another class of sensations we are stimulated to activity.

The senses which are subservient to the acquisition of speculative knowledge are five; touch, taste, hearing, seeing, and smelling.

The senses which incite us to exertion are chiefly three; hunger, thirst, and lust. They usually receive the appellation of *appetites*, in consequence of the tendency which they have to urge the mind to make efforts for their gratification.

2d, Memory is another organ or subordinate faculty that assists the understanding in the acquisition of knowledge. It is of two kinds; involuntary and voluntary. This last is usually called Recollection. The two kinds of memory ought to be carefully discriminated. It is only of involuntary memory that I mean to take notice at present.

To understand correctly what is meant by the subordinate organ or faculty in our constitution, called *involuntary memory*, let a man sit down for a few moments in a silent and solitary place, and attempt to exclude all thought from his mind; he will speedily find that, in

spite of himself, a variety of ideas of whatever has occurred to him in life, and of whatever he has felt or done, will involuntarily present themselves in succession to his thoughts ; or the objects and events which have excited his attention will become, as it were, once more present to his mind. • This revolving current of thought, by which our past sensations and exertions present themselves unbidden to the mind, is usually called “ the Train of our Ideas,” and constitutes involuntary memory. This singular organ or train of ideas is felt as in perpetual motion. It goes on whether we are asleep or awake. We can never altogether arrest its course ; for it proceeds like the act of breathing, independently of our will, though partially subject to its controul.

The train of ideas does not proceed, however, in a manner altogether arbitrary or unconnected. It usually presents to the mind those ideas in immediate succession which have some relation to each other, from the time, place, or circumstances, in which they were originally observed, or afterwards reflected on. Hence, when the idea of a particular house in the country occurs, the idea of the adjoining fields, woods, mountains, rivers, and the whole aspect of the neighbourhood, is apt immediately to present itself. • Hence also, by frequently perusing a passage in a book, it happens, that

when the first word is mentioned, all the remaining words spontaneously present themselves to the mind, or are exhibited by the memory. Thus there seems to be a sort of juxtaposition of ideas in the memory.

This tendency which one idea has to introduce certain others, is called the "Association of Ideas."

Voluntary memory or recollection is not a subordinate faculty or organ, but one of the exertions of the understanding or intellect.

3d, The human understanding or intellect consists of two powers or faculties ; Perception and Voluntary power or will.

The human understanding has four classes of *perceptions* : It perceives the objects of sense ; it perceives its own remembrances or the train of ideas ; it perceives its own voluntary exertions ; and, lastly, it perceives a distinction between all these objects or classes of perceptions. The three last of these classes of perceptions usually receive the appellation of Consciousness.

The *voluntary power* of the mind or the will is exerted in three ways : In commanding those muscles of the body by which its various movements are performed ; in directing the senses towards particular objects ; and in performing the office of recollection or voluntary memory. This last office, the voluntary power or will ac-

compleishes thus: It arrests the train of our ideas or remembrances, till a particular idea can be deliberately perceived, and its difference from every other idea felt or known; or the will alters the current of our present ideas, that others, to which we wish to attend, may have an opportunity of presenting themselves.

These two qualities or faculties of perception, and voluntary power or will, constitute the understanding or intellect; and with the aid of the subordinate faculties of sensation and involuntary memory, they form what is called the Mind of Man.

The perfection of the perceptive power is wisdom. It is capable of unlimited improvement; because there is no end of the degrees of acuteness and accuracy of discrimination which it may acquire; and the number of objects upon which it may be exerted is unbounded. The perfection of the will or voluntary power constitutes attention in speculation; and self-command, fortitude or intrepidity in action and in suffering. Its possible improvement is also unlimited; although it is easier to conceive its arrival at complete perfection, than the arrival of the perceptive faculty at the same point, inasmuch as it seems more practicable to attain to complete self-command, than to attain to a perfect perception or knowledge of the boundless works of Nature.

With a view to the explanation of their relative moral importance, I shall here consider the efforts ~~of~~ the human intellect, and the influence which it possesses in modifying the operations of the senses and of the memory. I shall afterwards, with the same view, take some general notice of the mode of its exertions in acquiring knowledge, and enjoying pleasure or suffering pain.

I. IN considering the mode in which the understanding modifies and influences the senses, I shall pass over the class of sensations called *appetites*, which will be afterwards noticed, and shall attend only, in this place, to those senses which are directly subservient to the acquisition of knowledge.

The senses of touch, taste, hearing, seeing, and smelling, when unassisted by the efforts of the understanding, are extremely limited and imperfect. The sense of sight, for example, only informs us of the existence of gradations of light and shade and colour. From hearing, we only know the existence of various modifications of sound; but not that these sounds represent or proceed from particular objects. Our more intimate acquaintance with Nature is the work of the understanding, which compares and judges of the information conveyed to it by the different organs of sense. Thus, to the sight, a

nutshell at the distance of three inches appears larger than a man at the distance of an hundred yards ; and it is only by the efforts of the understanding, in correcting the sense of sight by that of feeling or touch, that the truth is known. In the case alluded to, however, after we have been a few months in the world, we find so little difficulty in discerning the actual state of the fact, that we are apt to impute our knowledge of it to the sense of sight alone ; whereas it is actually the result of an act of judgment founded on experience and observation. In common cases, the perception of the truth, or the act of judgment, follows the sensation so quickly that it is difficult to distinguish the one from the other. When a trumpet is suddenly sounded loudly in our near neighbourhood, we are apt to say, and to imagine, that our ears inform us of the fact that a trumpet is blown ; whereas, in truth, our ears only inform us of the presence of a particular sound, which from experience we conclude, or know, to come from a trumpet when blown by a man. The difference between mere sensation and the act of thought which that sensation suggests, is more evident in cases of uncertainty ; as when we hear a rumbling noise, and are doubtful whether it is produced by a passing carriage or by thunder. In this case we are sensible that the sense of hearing informs us only of the pre-

sence of sound ; and that to perceive or know the object from which the sound proceeds, an effort of judgment is necessary. Upon the whole, the organs of sense seem to be those delicate parts of our corporeal constitution by which the mind comes into a sort of contact with external nature. The contact, however, is extremely imperfect ; and many efforts of judgment are necessary to enable the mind to make much use of the information thus obtained.

In the human body, the senses appear to be contrived in a way better calculated for the improvement of the mind than in any other animal. The sense of smelling, which is so curiously acute in some animals, conveys little information about the qualities of its object. Even the sagacious pointer-dog often mistakes a dunghil beyond a hedge for a covey of partridges : A pack of fox-hounds will pursue in full cry the track of a smoked herring when dragged along the ground ; and the highest perfection of this sense consists in merely distinguishing one animal from another. Accordingly this sense is by no means acute in man ; whereas the sense of touch, which gives information about the figure, extension, solidity, quantity, and relative situation of bodies, and which corrects the information conveyed by the other senses, is in the highest degree accurate

and extensive. While other animals are covered with a hard skin, and a coarser or a finer wool, which blunts their sense of feeling, the whole surface of the human body is one delicate organ of touch ; and the hands and the lips possess the most exquisite sensibility in this respect.

It has been made a question by some philosophers, how far we are certain that our senses do not deceive us ? I see, say they, an object with my eyes ; but how do I know that my eyes do not deceive me ? I feel the same object with my hands ; but may not the sense of touch also be fallacious ?

There is only one satisfactory answer to such questions. We are so formed that we cannot avoid giving credit to the testimony of our senses ; for we have no means of detecting the falsehood of what they attest. By the hand we can detect the errors of the eye ; but if our eyes, our hands, and our whole senses, concur in asserting the presence of an object, we have no evidence to which we can appeal to ascertain whether we are deceived or not. The Contriver of our constitution has so formed us, that our senses shall constantly bring information of certain events ; and that it shall be impossible for us to discover that these events do not exist. Hence, this fair inference arises, that it was the intention of the Author of our



nature that we should believe our senses. Whatever they tell us, therefore, is told by Him ; and here their authenticity rests.

The rule of duty, with regard to our senses, is extremely simple. Without some kind of sensations, we could possess no knowledge and no means of exertion. At the same time, sensation is not intellect. A man may possess a sound understanding, though destitute of sight or of hearing. It is therefore evident, that sight and hearing are only organs or tools employed by the mind, and form no part of the mind itself. Hence it follows, that the great perfection or exquisite improvement of any one of our senses, is an object of little importance in a moral point of view. Our duty, so far as they are concerned, seldom requires attention on our part, and is usually fulfilled without foresight. In the first periods of infancy, and amidst the earliest efforts of growing strength, we are employed in learning the proper use of our different senses, and in correcting them by each other. All that we ought afterwards to do for their benefit, consists merely in avoiding harm, and in taking care, in general, with regard to others placed under our care, that no artificial system of education may prevent or restrain that early exertion of the bodily powers which is necessary to the sound condition of the organs of sense, and to the acquisition of a clear

and correct acquaintance with the various objects contained in the material world.

II. MEMORY is almost entirely the creature of the understanding, or is produced by the joint efforts of the perceptive and voluntary powers. That a sensation may be remembered, it is necessary that an exertion of the will, or, as it is called, an act of attention, should be exerted. By this exertion of the will, two things are performed : the object of sense is distinctly exhibited, or, as it were, forced upon the notice of the perceptive faculty ; and at the same time the perception is noted down in the memory as in a book or record.

Where no attention is exerted, no impression appears to be made upon the memory. Hence, when occupied about an interesting affair, a clock may strike beside us, and an instant thereafter we shall forget that we heard it. Accordingly, in common life, the reason most frequently assigned for forgetting an occurrence is, that we gave no attention to it.

When an object has thus, by an act of will or attention, been inserted in the record of the memory, it is afterwards occasionally and involuntarily exhibited a-new by the revolutions of this record, or train of ideas, to the perceptive power. If no new act of will or attention towards this particular idea is exerted, it may

return again and again in the train of *id  * but it will do so more and more faintly, till at last it is entirely effaced from the memory.

If when a particular idea recurs, that is, when an object is involuntarily remembered, a new act of attention towards it is employed, and the current of ideas is arrested for a time by the will, that it may be distinctly noticed by the perceptive power; this new act, like every other effort of attention, is fixed in the record of the memory. The idea has now a double chance of being well remembered, because it has been the object of two distinct acts of attention; that is, it was attended to as an object of sense, and it was again attended to as an idea in the memory. Each of these acts of attention, being separately fixed in the living record within us, will afterwards present itself in the train of ideas. Thus, if a man, who has been present at a splendid entertainment, is desired, on the following morning, to give an account of the whole dishes presented there, and of the order in which they stood, he will probably find it no difficult matter to do so. Having done so, and thus exerted a new act of attention upon the subject, if he is requested, at eight or ten days distance, to recapitulate anew the order of the same entertainment, he will easily do so, in consequence of his having given an account of it when the event was re-

cent; whereas, had he not, on the day succeeding it, fixed all the particulars in his memory by a new act of attention, it is probable that in ten days the ideas of what he had seen would have become so faint and indistinct, that it would have been impossible for him to recollect or enumerate the particular objects distinctly.

It has been already remarked, that the train of ideas or memory is under the command of the voluntary power of the mind. We are conscious of efforts to stop the ordinary train of ideas, to divert it into a new channel, and to search, as it were, for a particular idea; all which efforts are usually comprehended under the general term of *recollection*.

From what has been here stated, the rules for improving the memory will be obvious.

A vigorous, active, and awakened mind, that gives close and pointed attention to the objects before it, will not only perform its present business in the best manner, but will also be enriched by the treasures of experience which it lays up for the time to come. When we hear of a person being employed an unusual length of time in acquiring a branch of knowledge that requires some exertion of memory, we may usually presume that he has been trifling. His attention and his thoughts have been wandering among scenes of folly; or he has been

*indolently dosing over his business, and imagined himself occupied as he ought to be, because he was doing nothing else. Where the mind is much interested, there is no want of memory. No man forgets an important promise made to him, the bank in which his money is deposited, or the name of the ship in which his fortune is entrusted.*

The next rule for the improvement of memory consists of acquiring habits of reflection upon what we have seen and heard and thought ; that by repeated efforts of attention every branch of knowledge that has been once acquired may be fully fixed in the train of ideas. Accordingly, they who obey the Pythagorean precept, of reflecting every evening upon the events of the day, will seldom suffer from want of memory. Men of real science, that is to say, whose knowledge is well concocted by reflection, always remember well ; because all the parts of their knowledge being repeatedly reviewed and considered, are fixed in the memory by frequent acts of attention. Hence it is that one man shall read an hundred volumes upon a branch of science, and shall know less of it than another man who has only perused a single elementary treatise upon the same subject, but who has thought steadily and often upon the science about which it treats. This does no doubt arise, in some measure, not so much from better me-

*memory, as from arrangement, or reducing the parts of the subject under a few general heads* (an operation of mind that will be afterwards explained), which renders memory less necessary. Thus a man, well acquainted with the theory or general principles of chemistry, will foretel the result of a process which he never saw performed, with as much accuracy as an apothecary's apprentice who has performed it an hundred times, and who speaks from memory alone. And thus there is scarcely an instance of a man having failed to acquire knowledge merely in consequence of a defective memory.

By exerting his attention much upon a particular subject, a man may store his memory so completely with ideas relative to it, that little else will occur to his mind, or be exhibited in the train of ideas. Thus some men become pedants, and can speak about nothing besides their own employment. Thus also, by constantly trying to find words which have a similarity of sound, but a difference of signification, a man may acquire, in so great a degree, the habit of punning, that it will be difficult for him to continue long any conversation without falling into his usual practice.

It is a subject not unworthy of consideration, how far memory forms a necessary part of the intellectual constitution of rational beings.

An ancient philosopher being shipwrecked upon an unknown shore, endeavoured anxiously to discover marks of habitation. Having observed several regular mathematical figures drawn upon the sand, he was much pleased, because it was a proof that the country was not inhabited by barbarians, but by intelligent and civilized men, some of whom must have lately been there. Of a building in a remote part of the country to which we are strangers, we readily say that it is unfinished; it is intended for such a purpose; the workmen have just left it, as appears from the state of the cement; they intend to return immediately, for their tools are scattered around: The stones are taken from the quarry, we remarked, at some distance; for they are of the same quality, and fragments of them are scattered on the way thither: The appearance of the earth cast out from the foundation proves that the building has been long delayed, but it will now be finished before winter, as all the materials are prepared, and many workmen seem to be employed. Thus we go on, talking with abundance of accuracy both of the past and of the future, in a case in which we have seen neither of these. In like manner, before we have been long in the society of a stranger, we can discover, without any special information or inquiry, the kind of society in which he has lived, the profession which he

has been taught, the place of his early education, the countries through which he has travelled; and from attending to his character and situation, we may even be able to foretel the future success or failure of the undertakings in which he is now engaged.

In this manner a man of penetration can, with ease and accuracy, foretel many future events, and discover many past ones, to which he was not personally present. We can even imagine it possible for beings to exist, possessed of such a degree of discernment, that from simply inspecting the present state of this world, and from observing the nature and relative situation of the materials of which it is composed, they would be capable of discovering the whole of its past and future physical history, with all the revolutions it has experienced; or is yet destined to undergo. At least, this is a degree of discernment towards which the mind of every enlightened man is continually tending. In proportion to the degree in which our knowledge becomes accurate and extensive, we find it easy to discover the causes and consequences of events. As our knowledge of human affairs, for example, increases, we learn to foresee the future fortunes of individuals, or the destiny of nations; and want of foresight comes to be justly regarded as want of intelligence. By observing well our present situation, our knowledge of past ages is



also rendered more clear and accurate. The ruins of petty fortresses, and of small houses of strength, which every where abound, point out the barbarous nature of the feudal government from which the European nations have lately emerged. The languages and laws of these nations point out their former connection under one government, and our religion explains its own Jewish origin. From these, and a thousand other circumstances, by means of reason alone, with little aid from memory, a man of sense, though his own years be few, may comprehend much of the past history of the universe.

It is also to be observed that improvement of mind, and improvement of memory, do by no means go always together. The way in which extensive knowledge is acquired, does not consist in improving the memory, so as to enable it to contain an immense multitude of detached facts, but in arranging those facts under such accurate heads and divisions, as causes them to be retained with very little exertion of memory. The perfection of a science is estimated according to the degree in which memory becomes of little value towards the acquisition of it: it has reached perfection when it is reduced to a few simple principles, from which every fact can be explained by the assistance of good sense alone.

But although the understanding, in its improved state, is capable of discerning many

truths with little assistance from memory, it is certain, that without the aid of this subordinate faculty or organ, it never could have attained to a state of improvement. To explain correctly the degree in which memory is necessary towards the acquisition of knowledge, it may be necessary to remark, that, in comparing objects with each other, this faculty is often absolutely requisite. For example, let it be supposed that we wish to discover the difference of colour between a piece of chalk and a lump of well prepared magnes a alba. If we are in possession of both of the objects, the comparison is made by the aid of the sense of sight alone, without any intervention of memory; but if we possess only a piece of chalk, and no magnesia, we must endeavour to recollect the degree of whiteness which we have perceived in the latter, and compare it with that which we now perceive in the former. Thus present objects can be compared with those that are absent only by the aid of memory; and much more is the intervention of this faculty necessary in making comparisons of objects neither of which are present to the senses. It may here be remarked, however, that an omnipresent Being could have no occasion for memory, wherewith to discern the varieties in the form and nature of the objects that exist in the universe; and that it is only in consequence of the limited and imperfect nature of

our senses that memory is rendered so extremely necessary.

This faculty is also rendered necessary to the improvement of the human understanding, in consequence of the mode in which objects and events exist; that is, from their succeeding each other, instead of co-existing. Living beings, whether men, or plants, or animals, appear in this world not at once, but after each other, in a continued train. Hence it becomes impossible to compare them with each other, and consequently to discover the similarity or difference of their qualities, otherwise than by the aid of memory. Without the aid, therefore, of the natural memory of individuals, or of history, which is the artificial memory of nations, the past could never be compared with the present, and experience could never be attained.

These remarks tend, in some measure, to elucidate the degree of estimation in which memory ought to be held, and the degree of attention which ought to be bestowed upon its cultivation. As a part of our intellectual constitution it is absolutely necessary; for without it we could never have become rational beings; but as, a faculty to be improved, its importance is not so great. Some persons possess from nature extraordinary powers of memory; in consequence of which, whatever is once fixed in that record, appears to remain there almost indelible. Hence

they remember not only objects and events, but the words of a foreign language, or the arbitrary names of persons or things, with surprising facility. This endowment affords great ease to its possessors, but it frequently produces bad effects: it enables young persons to become distinguished among their equals, with little exertion; and thus it gives rise to habits of idleness and vanity, which are overcome with difficulty. In the ancient popular governments, memory was extremely valuable on account of its importance to the art of oratory; but in modern times, it has declined in value in proportion to the easy diffusion of written eloquence which the art of printing admits of. A retentive memory is now chiefly useful for the acquisition of languages: but, even in this point of view, its value is declining; for in every polished nation there is a sufficient number of poets, and other elegant writers, to enable any man to form his taste with sufficient accuracy; and as books of science suffer nothing by translation, what is written in one language, with a view merely to the diffusion of knowledge, can speedily be procured and studied in any other.

Although the improvement of memory ought not to be neglected, yet from what has been here stated, it will readily occur that it is not to be regarded, like reason, as of infinite value—

Memory is not Wisdom—It is not the number of words with which our heads may be filled, but the clearness and energy with which we judge and act, that forms the perfection of our nature; and he is not the most excellent being who remembers the greatest number of events that have occurred in this world, but he who comprehends our nature and its situation best, and discerns most clearly its tendencies, and the degrees or kinds of perfection to which it is capable of being raised in its present, or in future circumstances.

III. FROM these subordinate faculties, or organs, I return to the consideration of the mode in which the understanding or intellect carries on its own operations.

I have said that the understanding consists of two faculties; the faculty of perceiving objects, and voluntary power or will. Of these, however, it is to be observed, that the voluntary is subordinate to the perceptive power, and is only exerted in consequence of the perceptive power having been awakened or affected by the presence of some object, or by some event. In the order of nature, the perceptive faculty at our birth, or earlier, is roused by sensations of pain. In consequence of these, it makes efforts, or exerts *its* voluntary power, for relief. These

feelings and exertions are gradually impressed on the memory, and are frequently, by means of it, presented anew to the perceptive power; which makes exertions of *its* voluntary power to recover or avoid these, and other feelings, according as they happen to be pleasing or painful. Thus, the perceptive faculty is, in truth, the mind or intellect itself; and the will is nothing more than this perceptive faculty engaged in action, or exerting itself, in consequence of its feelings or perceptions.

In acquiring knowledge, the understanding exerts itself thus: All human knowledge consists of an acquaintance with objects, and with the resemblance or difference of objects. Every sound exertion of the understanding in acquiring knowledge, therefore, consists of a comparison of objects. This comparison is made by a joint effort of the perceptive and voluntary powers. The mind can only perceive one object at a time. In comparing two objects, it first attends voluntarily to the one, and thereafter to the other. If no change is felt to take place in the state of the mind or perception, the objects are said to be alike, but, otherwise they are said to differ.

If the objects are present, and come under the cognizance of the senses, the voluntary power directs the senses towards them successively; and

the sensibility, or perceiving power of the mind, instantly discerns their similitude or difference, as that they are both black, or both white; or that the one is black, and the other white.

If the objects are absent, or are not objects of sense, the voluntary power, by its command over the memory, presents them in succession to the perceiving faculty; and their similitude or difference is immediately determined by their, producing or not producing a change in the state of the mind or perception.

Thus all judgment is intuitive; that is, the discernment of truth follows instantaneously the clear exhibition of objects to the perceptive power of the mind.

To perceive accurately wherein objects differ from each other, is often called judgment: whereas, to perceive that resemblances that exist among objects, is sometimes called wit. Thus the author of *Hudibras* finds a resemblance between the morning and a boiled lobster

When like a lobster boil'd, the morn  
From black to red began to turn.

A man of science, on the contrary, exerts his judgment to discover wherein objects differ from each other; and to arrange them into classes according to their different appearances.

In this way the celebrated Linnæus was enabled to point out certain circumstances, by which we can distinguish every particular species of plants amidst the almost endless variety of kinds that is to be found upon this globe.

One of the most remarkable comparisons made by the human understanding, is that whereby it notices the difference or similarity between itself and other beings. The human mind easily perceives its own superiority both over inanimate objects and over the inferior animals. It also perceives, by the aid of recollection, that its own faculties are improved by exertion; that its perceptions become more distinct and acute; its will becomes more powerful over the train of ideas; and that the train of ideas becomes enlarged, or better stored, by acts of observation: the mind likewise gradually perceives that many sufferings may be avoided, and many pleasures gained, by superior knowledge or intellectual improvement, which it thus learns to value or esteem. Comparing itself with other minds, it perceives that some of them proceed in a train of amelioration, while others remain feeble and unimproved. It perceives that the former must possess great advantages over the latter, or, in common language, it is said to approve of the one and to disapprove of the other.

This suggests an important question. Of the



productions of nature and of art, and of the actions of men, many are objects of approbation, and others of disapprobation. Does the mind observe any universal rule, or fixed principle, when it regards some as perfect and others as defective; or when it approves and disapproves? I have no doubt that this question may, with propriety, be answered in the affirmative; and that the following is the rule according to which excellence and imperfection are ascribed by the human mind to actions or to objects, or according to which they are approved or disapproved. From discerning its own superiority, that is, the superiority of mind over inanimate objects, and from perceiving the many advantages which itself, and other minds, derive from the improvement of the intellectual powers, the memory becomes gradually filled with ideas of the importance of mind and the value of its exertions; or, in other words, it becomes habitual for the human understanding readily to approve of excellent and improving minds, and of all those actions and productions which display that state of improvement. It regards with approbation every exertion of acute discernment and of voluntary power. Those characters, those actions, and those productions are contemplated with applause, which exhibit proofs of great knowledge or self-command, or which display the presence of much mind or great intellect.

On the contrary, the mind habitually learns to disapprove of whatever bears the marks of imbecility, ignorance, want of discernment, or want of intellect.

What is called reason, or a process of reasoning or argument, consists of a succession of perceptions, the last of which is termed the conclusion, or act of judgment. Thus we compare the height of one man with the length of a particular rod, and perceive that they are equal. At a future period, we compare the same rod with another man's height, and perceive that they also are equal. We then recollect that the first man's height was equal to the same rod, and, by passing the attention from one to another, we perceive that here are three objects all equal in length; or, in other words, we conclude or judge that the two men are equal in height. We compare the same rod to a wall, and find that it must be applied six times in a perpendicular line before it reach the top of the wall. Recollecting the men, we perceive, discern, or judge, that six of them on each other's heads would just reach the top of the wall; but by recollecting the position of their eyes, we perceive that none of them would see what was passing on the other side of it.

It has been considered as a question of some difficulty, how far we are certain of the truth of our perceptions, or that they are excited by ob

jects and events actually existing in nature ; and whether they may not all be mere dreams or illusory feelings.

We can correct the sense of sight by the sense of touch ; and we can appeal from the evidence of sensation, and even of memory, when separately considered, to the understanding or general power of perception ; which, after examining all the circumstances of the case, warrants the authenticity of the information which the senses and the memory convey, by concluding that they came from the Author of our nature, who can have no inducement to deceive. But who shall vouch for the authenticity of the understanding or power of perception in general, or warrant the truth of the information which it receives, or the decisions which it pronounces ? In short, how do we know that the understanding, or perceptive, or rational faculty, may not deceive us, by leading us to regard its own dreams or deceitful feelings for realities existing in the world ?

It is truly impossible to prove either the truth or the falsehood of what the rational or perceptive faculty asserts : For a man who denies the authority of reason, must do it in consequence of arguments, or of what he thinks good reasons ; and consequently he thus acknowledges the claims of that reasoning or judging faculty whose authority he pretends to

doubt: He, on the contrary, who brings reasons or observations to prove the certainty of reason, begs the question, and brings forward the understanding as a witness in its own favour. We give credit to the understanding, or to reason, therefore, not from any proof of its authenticity, but because we cannot avoid doing so. Here we are, in this world, placed and formed in the way that has seemed good to the Contriver of the universe. If all that we feel and know is a dream, we cannot help ourselves; we have no appeal from the decisions of the understanding; and were it to deceive us, we could have no remedy for the evil. It is, therefore, that to which we are left or commanded by the Author of our nature to give credit; and its dictates must, on this account, be regarded as his own. Reason, then, when understood to signify the perceptions of the human understanding, may justly be regarded as the word or the voice of God. It is in the nature of a revelation from heaven; and upon this authority its credibility rests\*.

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We have no reason to doubt the truth of our perceptions, or to suspect, with Bishop Berkeley and others, that the material universe may not exist. In a moral point of view, however, it appears to me to be of very little importance whether the material world be an actual substance, or merely an appearance exhibited by the supreme intelligence.

When reason is thus represented as equivalent to a revelation from heaven, one would imagine that its claims are stated sufficiently high; yet there have been men of much ability and eminence\*, who have thought that they ought to be stated still higher; who have represented reason or the understanding in man, as paramount or equal in point of certainty to the Supreme Intelligence; as discerning, antecedently to any observation of events, the principles which ought to regulate the Divine conduct itself; and as capable of discovering certain eternal, independent, and immutable truths, and a fixed estimate of right and wrong, not resulting from the will of the Maker of the universe, but necessary in themselves, and originally binding both upon him and upon us.

We have no reason to doubt that the human understanding actually does discern things as they are; and that when duly exerted, its dictates are those of truth: but it is unquestionably an error to suppose that we can otherwise perceive truth than as it is given us to perceive it; or that our certainty with regard to it rests upon any thing else than the will or the affirmation of

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The business of man in this world consists of the improvement of his rational nature; and it is of no importance whether that improvement be produced by means of phantoms or by means of realities.

\* As Dr Clark, Dr Price, &c.

the Author of the universe, as expressed in the constitution of our nature.

It is believed, that the high language which has sometimes been used concerning the super-eminent authenticity of human reason, arose chiefly from the zeal of some good and learned men to exalt the importance and certainty of the distinction between moral good and evil, or right and wrong, in human conduct. The will, or voluntary power in man, is not always employed in the pursuit of that intellectual excellence of which the mind approves. It is frequently employed in obedience to the appetites and even the most absurd passions: good men were therefore unwilling to admit that the perception of moral truth in man depends for its certainty upon the will, even of the Deity himself. They forgot that a Being, possessed of boundless intelligence, who is divested of appetites and weak affections, can only exert his will or voluntary energies in the accomplishment of what is most rational and excellent: They also forgot, that as the word truth means only the actual state of things in the universe, there can be no such thing as an eternal or necessary truth, that does not consist of a description of the Divine character and nature; for nothing else is eternal or necessary. All intellects being derived from this source, they can only possess a secondary or derivative constitution,

and perceive or judge according to that constitution.

Leaving this obscure subject, however, it will not be difficult to discover what is the duty of man with regard to his own power or faculty of understanding or reason. As the perfection of our rational faculty is equivalent to the perfection of our intellectual nature, and as that perfection is only to be attained by constant exercise, it becomes our duty to lose no opportunity of exerting our understanding in the pursuit of truth. The world on which we are placed is so contrived that it contains not a reptile, a plant or a blade of grass, a stone or a particle of dust, to investigate whose constitution and nature will not afford much employment for all our ingenuity and all our talents. When we add to these the extent of research presented by the variety of minds placed on this globe, and the reflection which is always necessary to enable men to conduct with propriety the affairs of life, it will readily be agreed, that it is not the fault of the Contriver of our existence, if the human understanding languish through want of employment. He has devised sufficient business to occupy our intellectual faculties, were we to *remain* in our present state during many ages. It is a part at least of our duty, then, while we continue to exist in this world, to occupy ourselves in the pursuit of all science.

and of all wisdom. We can never have enough ; for the more we acquire, the more discriminating and the more excellent will our nature become ; and there will still remain to be travelled an infinite length of the journey towards intellectual perfection.

I shall here add a few remarks upon a most important quality of the human mind ; I mean the modification to which the feelings of the perceptive faculty are subject, in consequence of which they become sometimes extremely grateful or pleasing, and at other times extremely painful.

Enjoyment and suffering, or pleasure and pain, appear to be the result of an excess of feeling or sensibility in the perceptive faculty ; or rather to arise from certain objects being very strongly pressed upon its notice.

Hence, in proportion as they are better known, all objects have a tendency to become indifferent, or to excite none of that excess of sensibility which is the cause of pleasure and pain ; for this obvious reason, that they are less attended to, or less perceived.

Pleasure and pain are mere involuntary feelings ; that is, we may or may not put honey into the mouth ; but having once placed it on the tongue, or organ of sense, the pleasure arising from its sweet taste is involuntarily produced.



Pleasure and pain arise from four original sources, out of which all our enjoyments and sufferings are derived: *First*, From the senses, whether they consist of appetites, or of those senses which are subservient to the acquisition of knowledge. *Secondly*, All efforts of voluntary power are attended with pleasure, when not overstrained or too long continued; in which case they become painful. *Thirdly*, The successful exertions of the perceptive faculty in performing clear and distinct acts of discrimination, or in discovering truth, are pleasing; whereas its unsuccessful efforts leave a painful sense of confusion, weakness, and dissatisfaction of mind. The pleasure produced by the exertions of the perceptive faculty may, in some measure, be ascribed to the will or voluntary power; an effort of which always accompanies them. In most cases, the pleasure is proportioned to the degree of attention, that is, of voluntary power which is exerted. *Lastly*, The memory of agreeable sensations and exertions is pleasing; and the memory of painful sensations and efforts is productive of uneasiness.

The pleasures which arise from our sensations, from our voluntary exertions, and from the memory of these, have a powerful effect in influencing human conduct, by leading us to an indulgence in them: and accordingly one great branch of moral duty consists of acquiring such

a degree of voluntary power or self-command, as may enable the mind to disregard these pleasures when placed in competition with better and more permanent interests ; a subject which will be discussed more fully in its proper place. In the meanwhile, it ought to be recollected, that the human mind consists only of three powers or faculties ; Sensation, Involuntary Memory, and Understanding or Intellect. I have called sensation and memory subordinate faculties ; because perfection of mind does not consist in their boundless improvement, and because the possession of them, in their most perfect state, is by no means necessary to the possession of an excellent intellectual character.

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## CHAP. II.

### OF IMAGINATION.

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I NEXT proceed to examine some of the most important speculative exertions of the human understanding ; and I begin with Imagination.

If the former Chapter has been well understood, it will not appear extravagant to say, that the

*imagination is an exertion of the understanding*  
*I have described the human intellect or un-*  
 derstanding as consisting of the two faculties of  
 perception and voluntary power; and I have  
 said, that by the aid of the subordinate faculties  
 of sensation and memory, it performs every in-  
 tellectual function or exertion. The effort that  
 obtains the name of *imagination* is performed in  
 this manner: The train of our ideas, or invo-  
 luntary memory, is continually going on, and  
 presenting to the mind its past sensations and per-  
 ceptions in their natural order, or as they have  
 formerly appeared. The mind, by its voluntary  
 power, sometimes arrests these ideas, calls up  
 others, and arranges the whole in a different  
 manner. This new arrangement changes their  
 effect upon the mind, or perceptive faculty.  
 The new combinations are treasured up in the  
 memory, and are remembered as a kind of new  
 objects, but as objects which we remember to  
 have never been presented by nature, but to  
 consist merely of groups of ideas arbitrarily ar-  
 ranged by ourselves.

Imagination has been called a creative faculty;  
 but, in fact, it is merely a power of arrange-  
 ment, and produces nothing new, being alto-  
 gether dependent upon memory for the simple  
 ideas or materials upon which it works. Dean  
 Swift's flying island, for example, and his  
 'Houyhnhms, contain nothing radically new;

although the arrangement of *ideas* which produced these fictions had in it much novelty. The ideas of an island and of motion in the air are familiar to the human mind. The ideas of rational actions, and of the figure of a horse, are equally familiar; and the whole novelty consists of the whimsical arrangement by which motion in the air is connected with an island, and rational conduct with the figure of a horse. By forming strange associations or arrangements of this kind, men can fancy to themselves the existence of ghosts, fairies, enchanters, monsters, and devils. It is to be observed, however, that imagination only arranges objects of sense, and chiefly objects of sight. We can form no image or imagination of the abstract qualities of intellect, such as virtue, justice, or courage; though, by a supposed resemblance, these qualities may be likened to objects of sense. The reason of this will afterwards appear.

The mind or perceptive faculty distinguishes the arrangements or objects which Nature exhibits, from those which itself has formed, by recollecting at pleasure, that these last were of its own production: But among the other calamities to which mankind are exposed, this is one, and surely the most dreadful, that the perceptive faculty sometimes loses a portion of its voluntary power, and ceases to be able to command the memory or train of ideas, or to

be able to call up, arrest, or dismiss ideas by an effort of its will. This constitutes mania or madness.

Under such a disease, the train of ideas, or involuntary memory, proceeds as usual, and presents to the mind all the objects of its former knowledge, and all the arrangements or imaginations that were ever formed by itself: but as the voluntary power over the memory is partially lost, the mind cannot arrest the course of its ideas, to recollect or distinguish which of them were originally of its own formation, and which of them arose from actual observation: neither has it the power of dismissing at pleasure any image that memory may chance to present to it. In such a situation, therefore, it believes as realities all its notions, and all the remembrances that happen to present themselves, and acts accordingly.

Sleep differs from madness in this, that the madman usually possesses full power over the muscles of voluntary motion, and can fully exert all his limbs; whereas in sleep, all voluntary power is lost over the body, as well as over the memory. The train of ideas goes on, and produces what are called dreams. While the sleep remains, these dreams are believed to be true, or the ideas presented by the memory are regarded as realities; because there is no power of dismissing them, or of recollecting their ori-

gin : but as the voluntary power over the body has ceased, as well as the power over the memory, the sleeper remains quiet, and does not disturb the world.

Here, then, is the difference between a state of sound intellect, a state of madness, and a state of sleep. A man of sound mind can arrange his ideas so as to imagine himself created emperor of China ; but he can also recollect that this is a fancy of his own forming, and he can dismiss it from his thoughts. If a madman chance to form the same notion, he will believe it to be true, and will assume the state of a monarch ; for he can command his body and even his memory in a partial degree : but he cannot dismiss an idea that presents itself strongly to his mind, nor so far exert recollection as to perceive its origin. If the same fancy occur to a man asleep, he will believe its truth like the madman : but he will lie still, and do nothing ; for he has no power over his body. When he awakens, he recovers at once his whole voluntary powers, and recognises the falsehood of the notion, or that it was a dream. From this example, it appears that the voluntary power of the human mind is extremely divisible, and may be possessed by the same person at different times in very different degrees. A paralytic person loses it with regard to some of his limbs, while he retains it with

regard to the rest ; and those who walk in their sleep retain it over their organs of voluntary motion, while they are destitute of it in almost every other respect.

When a man has formed to himself any very interesting notion, either of a pleasing or of a terrible import, he is apt to recur to it frequently; and to dwell upon the contemplation of it. For a time this may do little harm ; but gradually the memory, or train of ideas, may become so filled with the phantom, that it will continually recur of itself ; and by degrees so entirely banish every other subject of reflection, that at last the mind shall lose the power of getting quit of it at pleasure ; and will then of course begin to regard it as a reality. When things arrive at this extremity, the disease is a true madness, and is often incurable. It will at least be impossible to cure it by argument ; because the mind has as good evidence of the truth of what it fancies, as it has of any other truth ; that is, it cannot banish the idea, nor voluntarily recollect that it is a fancy formed by itself. In this manner do the illusions of vanity, of melancholy, and of all the passions, too frequently operate to the enfeebling or to the utter destruction of the human intellect.

Imagination, or the formation of new arrangements, is undoubtedly a very valuable mode of exerting the human understanding.

By collecting the perfections of various objects into a narrow compass, it presents to the painter images of beauty more perfect than ever Nature fashioned ; and it supplies the poet with more excellent characters, and higher efforts of integrity, than ever actually appeared among men. It is the soul of eloquence, by affording the means of illustration, or, of representing, in a striking light, the consequences which particular events have a tendency to produce upon human affairs. It constitutes the talent of invention ; as by it objects are arranged in new forms to the mind's eye, and the effect of the new combination discerned, before it actually exist, or is carried into effect by experiment.

Imagination is also the source of what is called *sympathy*, or that fellow-feeling which, on ordinary occasions, interests mankind so strongly in the welfare of each other. When we perceive marks of grief, or when an event of a calamitous or of a prosperous nature has occurred to an individual, we recollect our own feelings when we exhibited similar marks of grief ; or we arrange our ideas in such a manner as to suppose ourselves in a like calamitous or prosperous situation. By these means we are enabled, in some degree, to feel his feelings, and to think his thoughts ; and thus we learn to rejoice with them that rejoice, and to weep with them that weep. The prosperous or unhappy



person can also, on such an occasion, recollect the feelings of indifferent spectators ; who enter into his feelings indeed, but with more coldness than he himself does. Hence he is led to repress the more extravagant emotions of gladness or of grief, that he may obtain the fellow-feeling of others. Thus from the exercise of imagination we learn a degree of self-command and of disregard for external events, before an improved judgment has taught us the value of the one, or the superiority which we ought to possess over the other.

Imagination is extremely improveable. By acquiring a great variety of ideas upon a particular subject, and by frequently labouring to form new arrangements of these ideas, a man may usually attain to very great powers of imagination. It is by this industry that individuals become celebrated as wits, poets, painters, mechanics, or orators ; for what is called *genius* in these arts is truly nothing more than this power of forming new arrangements acquired in an uncommon degree. But all men possess this power in a certain degree. By acquiring much knowledge, therefore, with regard to any particular branch of art, and by exerting much upon it his powers of forming new arrangements, a man of sense can scarcely fail to acquire what is called a rich and fertile imagination with regard to that art ; and thus he will

become what is called a man of genius. His genius will be accounted more or less splendid in proportion to the variety and singularity of the combinations which he forms. Thus the first efforts of a young poet, orator, mechanic, or other artist, are often as defective as can well be conceived; but by perseverance and well-directed exertions, his imagination becomes fertile, his judgment accurate, and his more mature productions are denominated works of genius.

Our duty with regard to the imagination is obvious. As imagination is nearly equivalent to invention in every department of art or of science, the possession of it in a state of fertility and vigour must be attended with advantages proportioned to the utility or excellence of the art in which it is exerted. A man who contrives an improvement in agriculture, by which a spot of ground is made to afford, with no more labour than formerly, a double quantity of the productions necessary to the subsistence of man, affords the means of increasing the measure of intelligence and of reason that exist in this world; for as a greater quantity of food can now be procured, a greater number of intelligent beings will be brought into the world, and will find subsistence in it; or if the numbers of mankind are not increased, yet the greater facility with which the necessities of life may be

procured, will enable multitudes of persons to devote a larger portion of time than formerly to the pursuits of science and the improvement of their faculties. It is impossible to calculate, or even perhaps to conceive, how much intelligence, and how many enlightened minds, the first contriver of the plough, or of the fishing net, have produced in the world. It is, therefore, every man's duty to cultivate his inventive powers, that he may be enabled to labour with success in the discovery of what is truly valuable. It is also his duty to cultivate those powers of fancy, by which truth and reason are communicated and diffused with clearness and energy. Thus wherever he comes, although he make no books, and deliver no orations, yet his conversation at least will diffuse good sense and knowledge, and all who associate with him will become, in some measure, enlightened and wise as he is.

To regulate well the wanderings of imagination is also an important part of our duty. To build what are called castles in the air, or visionary fabrics of felicity, is often a favourite amusement of the young and the happy. But much time is thus uselessly consumed, and a disgust is often acquired for the serious and humble occupations of real life. The best security against these evils, as well as against the melancholy images

of calamity and care which sometimes take possession of the memory, and unhinge the voluntary power or self-command of the mind, consists of cultivating the understanding in a high degree, and of learning to act upon the maxims of sound wisdom. He who is fully satisfied that there is nothing truly valuable but a discerning and vigorous mind, and that there is nothing truly unfortunate but error and weakness, will not be apt to lose his self-command, by indulging in dreams either of pleasure or of misery. If at any time, however, a man of sense shall perceive that his understanding is in any degree led captive, it becomes instantly his duty to seek the obvious remedy for so serious an evil. This remedy consists of diversified and active occupation, by which the attention is turned to new objects, and the memory is enabled to present various images to the mind.

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### CHAP. III.

#### OF ARRANGEMENT, AND THE FORMATION OF LANGUAGE.

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**A**RRANGEMENT is that exertion of intellect by which, upon perceiving an object possessed of a peculiar quality, we voluntarily recollect all the other objects which resemble it in that respect, and endeavour to fix the fact of their resemblance in the memory. In arranging objects, we either give little attention to their permanent and important qualities, and are only solicitous to produce new and unexpected groups of ideas; in which case we are said to exert imagination: Or we endeavour to arrange objects according to their real and obvious qualities, which is called *Philosophical Arrangement*, and has the acquisition of knowledge for its end. Of this last kind of arrangement, I now mean to take notice.

The universe consists of a vast variety of individual objects, many of which are continually changing their forms, and every one of which

differs in some circumstance from all the rest. Amidst such a diversity, it would be impossible, without arrangement, for men either to acquire or to convey to each other any valuable knowledge; for every separate object, and every change which that object undergoes, would be a separate subject of study, and would require to be separately fixed in the memory. At every step we should encounter new difficulties; for no advantage could be derived from experience, as the next object would be no less new than the preceding one. To surmount these difficulties, we endeavour to find out qualities in objects in which they resemble or differ from each other, and we arrange them into classes; that is, we do one of two things; we either make an effort of the mind to lodge them as it were close together in the memory, that the train of ideas may, by association, for the future present them all at the same time; or, more frequently, we endeavour to fix in the memory the fact, that various natural objects possess a particular common quality; and for the future we satisfy ourselves with remembering this fact, and think no more of the objects themselves. Thus the astronomer finds means to count the stars, by arranging them into what are called *constellations*, according to their situation in the heavens; he recollects the constellations, though he forget the individual stars of which they consist. The bota-

nist arranges the whole plants with which nature has so lavishly adorned and enriched this world, according to certain appearances in their flowers, which are sufficiently various for the purposes of discrimination, and, at the same time, sufficiently simple to be recollected with facility. The mechanic, in like manner, recollects bodies, as globes, cylinders, cubes, or pyramids; and the surfaces of bodies, as triangles, squares, or circles.

In this way, by arranging objects according to their common qualities, all physical science is formed: For human science consists merely of a knowledge of facts, or of the actual state of the universe. This knowledge is acquired by observing events and objects, and is retained by arranging facts according to the circumstances in which a great number of individuals happen to agree or to differ from each other.

Moral Science is formed by observing what those actions are which produce or display the greatest degree of perfection of mind in ourselves or others; and in arranging them under heads or branches, which are denominated virtues.

The perfection of any branch of science consists of two things; of the accuracy with which all the facts connected with it have been investigated, and the clearness of the divisions or

branches into which these facts have been distributed.

We can never discriminate with too much accuracy between the various objects of nature, or exercise the mind too much in forming correct or scientific arrangements of them. No such danger arises from this exertion as from forming the arrangements of imagination. By imagination, objects are connected which in themselves have no strict similarity. The value of such combinations often consists of their novelty or extravagance. Hence they have at times a tendency to mislead the understanding; whereas the perfection of the scientific arrangements now mentioned, depends entirely upon the accuracy of judgment, and the attention to truth that is exerted in their formation. They do not, therefore, store the memory with what is illusive and false, but with true and real similarities and distinctions between the different objects of nature, or the various exertions of the human mind.

The important art of *Speech or Language*, is brought to perfection chiefly by efforts of arrangement or classification.

We can only express what we perceive. The nature and extent of language, therefore, will be accurately understood by considering attentively the different classes of our own perceptions.

In the *first* place, then, the human mind per-



*ceives present objects by the senses, and absent objects by the train of its ideas or memory: Secondly, the human mind perceives that objects resemble or differ from each other: And, lastly, it perceives its own exertions, or the efforts of its voluntary power.*

Thus the human mind having three classes of perceptions to express, must have three classes of words or signs whereby to express them. It must have names for objects; names for expressing wherein one object differs from another; and names for actions or exertions.

The names of objects are called by grammarians simply *names* of substances, or *substantive nouns*, as George, London. "The names of resemblances and differences of objects are called *adjective nouns*, because they are usually added to names; as in the expressions, a good man, a rich man, a beautiful woman. Here the words good, rich, and beautiful are adjective nouns.

The names of actions or exertions are called *verbs*; as to love, to hate, to eat, to drink.

These three kinds of words constitute the whole of the radical or necessary part of language, because they express the three classes of perceptions of the human mind; I mean the perception of objects, the perception of their differences or resemblances, and the perception of its own exertions.

But for the sake of recollecting with ease the

*various objects of nature and exertions of mind*, men are gradually induced to arrange objects and exertions, and the differences between objects under different classes or heads. To these classes names are given, and in this way discourse is greatly shortened; for it becomes no longer necessary in conversation to enumerate individual objects, as the name of the class or group to which they belong includes a great number of particulars, and renders the special mention of them superfluous. Thus the word *forest* may include a million of trees, and save the trouble of enumerating them all.

Hence language comes to consist of four kinds of words: *First*, of names of things or substantive nouns: *Secondly*, of names of the differences of things or adjective nouns: *Thirdly*, of names of actions or verbs: And, *lastly*, of names of classes of things, or classes of distinctions between things, or classes of actions.

The names of classes have not obtained a special name from grammarians, but have been confounded with the kinds of words whose use they abridge. Thus the word *horse* is called a name or substantive noun, though in fact it is not the name of any one object in nature, but is the name of a class which includes multitudes of individuals.

As this subject is of much importance to Moral Science, and indeed to all science, I shall

*pursue it somewhat more minutely, and shall take notice of the first three classes of words separately, and at the same time of the abbreviations or words of the fourth class that arise out of each of them.*

1st. Names of substantives, or substantive nouns, are thus invented: To enable two individuals to communicate to each other the approach of a particular object, perhaps a dangerous wild beast, they form an agreement by such signs as they can devise, that a certain sound shall resemble the object: thereafter, when the object is perceived by one of the parties, he immediately, by an effort of his will or voluntary power, recalls the name agreed on, and utters it to his friend, who, by a similar effort of will or voluntary power, over the train of his ideas, recollects the object that it was agreed to represent. When this exercise has been frequently repeated, the sound of the name, by the association or habitual train or current of ideas, instantaneously, and without effort, produces the remembrance of the object, and the sight of the object produces the remembrance of the name.

Of the objects that exist in the universe, however, very few have received names, and these names scarcely form a part of language, as it is no mark of disgraceful ignorance for a man to be unacquainted with many of them even in

*his native tongue.* A *forest* may consist of millions of trees, yet no one of these trees has ever probably received a special name, although each tree is a totally distinct object from all the rest. Every particular bird, beast, fish, stone, or plant that exists in nature, is itself a separate individual; yet it is obvious that we should find it impossible either to contrive names for them all, or to remember such an infinite variety of names after they had been contrived. Such an effort of invention or of memory would even be altogether useless, and is superseded by means of arrangement. The objects of nature are arranged into different classes, and we satisfy ourselves with assigning names to the classes. Thus the word *horse*, introduced as the name of a class of objects, includes an immense multitude of individuals. The word *quadruped* includes a still greater multitude; and the word *animal*, denotes every object in the world that is possessed of sensation. These words, *horse*, *quadruped*, or *animal*, may be used at pleasure, to express either the whole class of objects, or any one individual contained in it; which affords the means of greatly shortening discourse, and relieving the memory.

Names of substances or objects, and of classes of objects, or substantive nouns, are the simplest kind of words; and hence men have a great

tendency to reduce 'all other words into the form of names or substantive nouns, as will immediately appear.

2d. The names of the differences between objects or adjective nouns are invented for the sake of expressing comparisons. Thus we express the difference of taste between sugar, vinegar, and wormwood, by saying that the one is *sweet*, the other is *sour*, the last is *bitter*. As the objects, however, that exist in nature are numberless, and no two of them are exactly alike, it has been found impossible to contrive or to remember names for all the various degrees of distinction that they exhibit. On this account, the differences between objects or their qualities have been reduced into classes, and general names have been assigned to each class. Of this nature are the words good and bad, great and little, wise and foolish. These do not express the difference between any two particular objects; but they express in general all those differences of which we approve or disapprove, in whatever circumstance the difference may consist. Thus the word good, when applied to vinegar, means that it is sour; applied to honey, that it is sweet; applied to oak timber, that it is hard; to a down-bed, that it is soft; to a merchant, that he is rich; to a soldier, that he is brave; and 'to a scholar, that he is learned. In the same manner, he who is in

one sense a *great* man, may in another sense be a very *little* man; and a little tree may be much larger than a tall shrub.

Adjective nouns have no meaning when they stand alone, as they are not names of things or of objects, but merely of the differences between objects. Hence, to give them a signification, we must add to them the name of the object whose difference from other objects we mean to express. Thus the words good and evil, wise and foolish, mean nothing, unless we add to them the name of some being or object whom we wish to distinguish; for there is no such thing as abstract good or abstract evil in the universe.

But although the differences between objects are not themselves real objects, mankind have always been disposed to give names to them, and to reduce them into the simple form of substantive nouns, as if they actually were objects, and had a separate existence. Hence the general adjective good has been changed into goodness; wise, into wisdom; foolish, into folly; poor, into poverty; happy, into happiness; and white into whiteness. Goodness, wisdom, folly, poverty, happiness, or whiteness, however, are not objects that actually exist in nature; they are merely names assigned to classes of the degrees of difference, that exist between objects.

The word whiteness, for example, may express a considerable variety of colours, as it is obvious that what is called whiteness of skin in a man or woman, differs greatly in colour from the whiteness of chalk; and hence the word whiteness has no precise meaning, till we point out the particular object to which it refers. Such words enable us to talk in a general manner of whole classes of the differences betwixt objects, without alluding to any particular individuals; and hence they are the great sources of ambiguity in language, and of misapprehension among men. Thus one man calls it wisdom to gather money; another calls it wisdom to get himself talked of; a third accounts himself wise when he knows how far it is to the moon; and a fourth, when he understands some unknown tongue that nobody cares about. Some people account every thing poverty that is below an hundred thousand pounds sterling; while others think themselves rich with the hundredth part of that sum. When such general words, therefore, are used by a man without a previous explanation of the particulars included by him under them, we can derive little benefit from his discourse.

3d. Verbs, or words expressive of action in ourselves or others, either signify particular actions, or they denote classes of actions. Thus

ie words to bite, to chew, and to swallow, express the particular steps of an action which is expressed at once by the general verb to eat. The verb to walk expresses a variety of exertions of different muscles of the body ; and the verbs to move, to act, and to think, include almost all other verbs.

The same thing happens to verbs that I have mentioned as happening to adjective nouns. Mankind have always been disposed to convert them into substantive nouns, and to give *names* to actions or exertions, as if they were objects or substances permanently existing in Nature. Thus the verb to move is converted into the substantive noun *motion* ; to extend is converted into *extension* ; to endure is changed into *duration* ; to be idle is changed into *idleness* ; and to act is changed into *action*. Motion, extension, duration, and action, are not objects that actually exist in the universe ; they are merely names assigned to classes of exertions, or supposed exertions, by which we are enabled to talk of them in a general and simple form, as if they were real objects or substances. These words, therefore, do not differ in meaning from the verb from which they are derived ; for when it is said that *action* or activity is better than *idleness*, the meaning is the same as if it had been said that *to act* is better than *to be idle*.

One of the most frequent perceptions of the



human mind is that by which it notices a difference in the state of external objects corresponding with a difference in the train or state of its own ideas. A twig is planted in the earth, and becomes a great tree ; a traveller is seen far off, and afterwards near or at hand ; a ship was observed in the harbour, and thereafter at a distance at sea. While these changes took place, the train of ideas, which continually proceeds, presented a variety of objects or thoughts to our minds, and we have made many and various exertions. Comparing what passes within with what passes without, we say that we have *existed, lived, or endured*, while these changes took place. Converting these verbs into substantive nouns, we say that we have enjoyed *life, existence, or duration*, while such events were passing around us ; and as all our own actions and all the changes that occur in Nature, happen in succession, they are compared with the succession of our ideas or our duration. In all languages, therefore, verbs, or the words expressive of action, are formed in such a manner as to express, by a change of sound, both the action itself, and the relation which it bears to the train of our ideas or to our duration. This is called by grammarians the *time* or *tense* of the verb. Thus *standing* implies a present act, and *stood* implies a past action. In some languages, such as the English, most verbs are so harsh

or abrupt in their sound, that they cannot be changed without offending the ear; and in these harsh languages, certain verbs make an important figure, by being substituted for the changes of sound that are used in smoother tongues. Such are the verbs that signify to exist or *be*, to possess or *have*, to act or *do*, to exert power or to *will*. These supplementary verbs express the time or tense of the verb to which they are annexed. Thus we can say, "William hears," or he exists, or "is hearing." We can say, he heard, or he was hearing, or he hath heard, or he did hear. While in the English language we say, "I have loved," "I had loved," "I will love;" in the Latin tongue these allusions to time are expressed by the mere inflection of the word that signifies to love (*amavi, amaveram, amabo*).

The most difficult part of language is its abbreviations. Not only are words contrived to express classes of objects, classes of differences between objects, and classes of actions; but words are also invented to stand for whole sentences, or for parts of sentences. When we say that two persons are *cousins*, the word cousin is used to avoid saying that the grandfather or grandmother of the one was grandfather or grandmother to the other. By the words merchant or soldier, we in the same manner avoid entering into a description of the mode of life

of the person to whom we give these appellations. Thus also the monosyllable "I" is used instead of saying, "the person who speaks;" "thou" or "you," instead of "the person to whom I speak;" and "he," instead of "the person of whom I speak."

There is also a way of abridging discourse by nicknaming words, or abridging the sound of them. Thus the word "if," or the \* Scotch word "gif," is the verb "give." "If I go to London," when written at full length, is "give or grant that I go to London." "And," is said to be a corruption of an old verb "anad," to add. The expression "John and James," was originally "to John add James."

Language is the most distinguishing accomplishment of man; and an accurate acquaintance with its principles is a more important speculative duty than is generally supposed. Being the medium by which, in this world, minds hold intercourse with each other, and reciprocally communicate knowledge, ignorance of its nature has given rise to very gross errors, and even to great moral calamities, of which I shall now take notice.

The simplest form or branch of language, as already stated, is that by which particular words

or appellations are made to represent particular objects. This simplicity has induced mankind, whenever it was possible, to give the form of names or substantive nouns to their expressions. I have already mentioned, that not only classes of objects have been treated in this way by the contrivance of such words as a tree, a house, an animal; but also that adjective nouns, or words expressive of the difference between objects, have received this form by the invention of such words as goodness, justice, wisdom, and others of a like nature. Even verbs, or words expressive of action, have been converted into the form of substantive nouns or names, by means of such words as motion, life, duration, existence, extension, for the sake of enabling us to talk in a short and simple manner of classes of exertions, without alluding to any particular exertion.

Very extraordinary effects have arisen from this practice of converting all words into the form of substantive nouns or names. As substantive nouns or names were originally used to denote particular existing objects, a notion gradually crept into mens minds, that all words bearing this form must represent particular objects actually existing in nature. The poets made a notable use of this notion. They amused their hearers or their readers by representing the words war, wisdom, love, revenge, and

others, as beings endued with intelligence, and as performing an important part in the business of this world. War was a terrible being, who stirred up strife between nations, and presided over battles. Wisdom was a beautiful virgin clothed in armour, who sprung from the brain of Jupiter, the father of gods and men. Thus the poets personified all the most remarkable of those secondary substantive nouns which had been formed from adjective nouns or verbs, or had been adopted as names of classes of events; and thus they truly gave

to airy nothing  
A local habitation and a name.

Had matters been carried no farther, little harm would have ensued. But mankind began gradually to believe that the entertaining and marvellous stories told them by their poets about these fictitious beings were all true. Artists flattered this popular delusion, by producing beautiful pictures and statues of those creatures of imagination. Temples were at last built to their honour; priests were consecrated; a system of superstitious idolatry banished from the human mind all discernment of truth; and the people worshipped mere vocables under the figure of beautiful paintings and statues of male and female deities.

The delusion, under a different form, reached

the philosophers themselves. Supposing that every word which bears the form of a name or substantive noun must represent a particular object, it became a very puzzling question, What particular object we speak of when we use such words as a tree, goodness, motion? or what idea is present to the mind when we think of a tree or of goodness in general, and not of any particular tree, or particular example of goodness?

The Platonists supposed that there are certain uncreated essences of things, which existed from all eternity in the Divine Mind; and that these essences are the objects of thought, or the things signified by general terms.

The followers of Aristotle believed the existence of something like the Platonic essences, which they called, *substantial forms*; which they said are continually flying off from all bodies, and which form the objects of thought when we use general expressions.

At last, during the dark ages, there arose a new sect of philosophers, led by Peter Abelard, whose misfortunes have been rendered interesting by the talents of Mr Pope. The followers of this new sect asserted, that when we think of a general term, we think only of the term or word itself. They were called NOMINALISTS, in opposition to the followers of Aristotle and Plato, who were called REALISTS. The nomina-

lists were nearly in the right ; for when we think of the number nine, in general, without thinking of any set of objects in particular, it is obvious that we do not think of any object that exists in Nature, but merely of a word which may be used to avoid a tedious enumeration of particulars. If at any time we proceed farther than this, it is only to recollect some of the particular objects that we suppose the speaker to include under the general term, that we may be the more certain of his meaning. Thus when a tree in general is spoken of, without reference to any particular tree, we satisfy ourselves with calling into the memory an indistinct image of a trunk and branches.

To this day, however, the nature of language is by no means well understood. And hence we find the writings of metaphysicians filled with discussions about time, space, and eternity ; as if they were objects which actually exist, and not merely general terms intended to represent trains of perception or of thought in the human mind. The mathematicians also, who usually pay little attention to the operations of intellect, and have little knowledge of them, are still disputing about the definition of points, and lines, and surfaces ; as if they were objects actually existing, and capable of being defined, or specially marked out and distinguished from other particular objects. Thus they define a

point to be that which hath no parts or no magnitude ; or, in other words, they define it to be nothing at all. Indeed *their* point is nothing at all. A point or puncture is no doubt something, when made with a needle on the skin, or with a pen upon paper ; but the ~~mathematical~~ point, or the general term, is merely the verb to point or puncture under the disguise of a substantive noun, in the same manner that the verb to move is converted into motion, or to exert into exertion. The only explanation that can be given of such words, consists, not of defining or describing their objects (for they are not the names of real objects), but of exhibiting particular instances of punctuation, exertion, or motion, to which they may at pleasure be applied ; just as we explain the word *sour* by presenting a *sour* object, or the word *five* by exhibiting so many individual objects, and by declaring that this word applies to all similar classifications or quantities.

Much of what is called argument is often nothing more than an explanation of words : Thus, to prove that temperance is a virtue, we may say that virtue consists of intelligence and self-command : But temperance is an exertion of self-command ; therefore temperance is a virtue. Here the conclusion is contained under the first proposition or expression ; and the



argument is nothing more than a statement of one of the particular facts contained under it.

I shall here quit the subject of language ; because I wish to discuss it no farther than is necessary to point out the importance of the study of it to the improvement of the human mind. Endless literary disputes have arisen from the want of a correct knowledge of the meaning of the words which the disputants employed, and from their consequent misunderstanding of each other. Systems of superstition have arisen out of mistakes concerning the nature of words. Truth and falsehood have been confounded, and the affairs of life rendered difficult and intricate, from inattention to their precise import. Hence it becomes, in some measure, every man's duty, as he wishes either to give or to receive improvement, to endeavour to understand clearly, and to use correctly, this great organ of social communication.

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## APPENDIX TO THE PRECEDING CHAPTER.

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### OF THE INTELLECTUAL FACULTIES OF THE INFERIOR ANIMALS.

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WHEN discussing the subject of language, the question naturally suggested itself, how it comes to pass that none of the inferior animals possess the power of speech? On pausing to consider the proper answer to this question, it occurred, that it would afford no bad test whereby to discover whether I had been giving a correct account of the human faculties; because if I had given a complete, and at the same time a well discriminated, detail of the intellectual powers of man, I ought to find no difficulty in explaining, with precision, wherein the intellectual inferiority of the other animals consists, or in pointing out the particular powers by the want of which they are disqualified from acquiring the use of language, and from engaging in a career of improvement.

I need not express to the builders of systems how much I here trembled for mine. On reflection, however, I have satisfied myself, with what justice others must determine, that, on the principles already stated, it actually is extremely easy to explain the metaphysic, or natural history of the minds of the inferior animals. This explanation throws considerable light upon some of the operations of the human mind.

Some of the inferior animals possess organs sufficiently fitted for uttering articulate sounds ; and accordingly they can easily be taught to pronounce words ; but to these words they do not affix any meaning. Other animals cannot be taught to utter words, though they seem to understand many words when spoken by man. But no animal possesses the power of speaking and of understanding its own speech at the same time. The reason is this :

Animals possess sensation, involuntary memory, and a perceptive faculty. They also possess voluntary power over their limbs and organs of sense ; but the defect or the inferiority of their intellectual nature consists of this, that they possess no voluntary power over their memory, and therefore cannot intentionally recollect any thing. When they see one object, they cannot, by an act of will, arrest the train of their ideas, and call up the remembrance or idea of another that resembles it ; and hence

they cannot arrange or form classes of objects. The general terms of language, therefore, such as a tree, a house, goodness, motion, which are not names of objects, but of classes of objects, or of perceptions and exertions, must be for ever unintelligible to them ; as, when they hear the word, they cannot voluntarily recollect the multitudes of particular objects or events to all or any one of which it may refer.

By means of involuntary memory, an inferior animal may be taught to, expect particular events. If the same word is repeated to a dog every time he is fed, the sound of the word will become involuntarily associated in his memory with the pleasure of eating, and he will acquire the habit of coming to the person who pronounces this word ; but he can never make use of this or of any other word himself, because he cannot voluntarily recollect or recal it to his memory. When he sees an object, he cannot intentionally recollect its name ; and when he hears the name, he cannot recal the absent object : though, by the effect of association, he may feel pleasure when a name is repeated, or acquire the habit of performing certain motions in obedience to it.

When I reflect that my mind is superior to the mind of a dog, only because my memory obeys my will, and that this difference may possibly arise merely from some minute cir-

cumstance in our original organization, I am humbled by the consideration, and I cannot help regarding the doctrine of the metempsychosis or transmigration of spirits, and the humane sentiments which it inspires, with a considerable degree of respect.

The state of a man under complete mania or madness is similar, in some respects, to the ordinary state of an inferior animal. They both possess the command of their organs of sense and motion; but no power over the memory exists in either of them. The inferior animals are not subject to the disease of madness; because it consists of the loss of a power which they never possessed. The canine madness is no exception to this rule; as it seems to be merely the agitation arising from extreme pain, or from a tendency to suffocation.

A madman, however, differs from an inferior animal in some respects. Besides that his madness, or want of voluntary power over the train of his ideas, is seldom complete, the effects of his having once been a rational being still remain with him. His memory is stored with arrangements of ideas formed in his better days. These at times involuntarily become present to his mind; and the want of power to dismiss them induces him to act as if they were true and real. It is also to be remarked, that the power or energy which inhabits the human

form possesses immense activity. If, in consequence of any defective conformation, this activity cannot be exerted in the natural or ordinary manner, it will act and exhaust itself in some other way. Hence arises the restlessness and excessive strength of madm<sup>n</sup>. Whereas the other animals, possessing originally a less exuberant portion, of voluntary power, act at all times in a regulated and moderate manner.

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## CHAP. IV.

### OF TASTE.

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TASTE, in the popular acceptation of the word, is the power of distinguishing and of receiving pleasure from certain objects as beautiful or sublime, and of receiving uneasiness from other objects, on account of their being considered as deformed or mean. The word 'Taste itself is metaphorical, or a term of comparison borrowed from one of our senses. It literally signifies the power of distinguishing and of receiving pleasure or pain from certain objects, when applied to the tongue, which is the 'organ of sensitive taste.

As that peculiar exertion of the human faculties, which receives the appellation of a taste for what is sublime and beautiful, has been the subject of much speculation among men of letters, I shall here take some notice of its nature, and of the degree of estimation in which it ought to be held in a moral point of view.

The objects, the contemplation of which affords pleasure to the human mind on account of their beauty or sublimity, are so extremely numerous, that it is difficult to know where to begin a detail of them. To those who look around with discernment, the whole heavens and the earth and the ocean are covered with glory and beauty. The bright and the lowering sky, the calm and the troubled ocean, the green covering of the earth, and its alternate state of hoary desolation, are all either beautiful or sublime, and as such are fitted to give pleasure. To those possessed of a delicate taste, not only the whole, but every minute part of nature produces the same effect.

Lo ! not an hedge-row hawthorn blows,  
 Or humble harebell paints the plain,  
 Or valley winds, or fountain flows,  
 Or purple heath is ting'd with vain:  
*For such* the rivers dash the foaming tides,  
 The mountain swells, the dale subsides ;  
 E'en thriftless furze detains their wand'ring sight,  
 And the rough, barren rock grows pregnant with  
 delight.

SHEENSTONE.

Perhaps, indeed, there exists not a plant, an animal, or any object that nature has produced, which may not, when regarded in some point of view, be justly accounted beautiful. Not only do the human race, in the form of their bodies, in their actions, and their arts, come under this description, but even the meanest insects and reptiles have something in their structure, in their mode of subsistence, or the changes they undergo, which confers a beauty upon them, and renders the contemplation of their nature pleasing.

The sole object of what are called the fine arts, is to afford gratification to taste; and the objects of these arts are formed for no other purpose but to do so. We should err widely, however, were we to suppose that the empire of taste extends no farther over the various efforts of human skill than merely to those which come under the above appellation, and that no beauty is to be found in any art beyond the circle of poetry, painting, and music. Almost every art of every kind, however homely its object may be, is in some respects to be considered as a fine art, inasmuch as its productions are, in certain circumstances, accounted beautiful. We every day hear of beautiful chairs, tables, broad cloth, carts, ploughs, coaches, and, in short, whatever is employed for utility or pleasure, at times receives this appellation. 'Mathe-



maticians tell us of beautiful demonstrations, and anatomists talk with great ease of *elegant* and *beautiful* anatomical preparations. Even a dunghil may perhaps appear beautiful in its proper place and season; and an intelligent agriculturist would probably regard a farm-yard in which it should be wanting as deformed and defective on that very account.

Hence to attempt to take particular notice of all the objects of taste, would be to attempt an enumeration of all the works of Nature, of many of the works of art, and of all the generous, the wise, and virtuous actions that ever have been, or that ever can be, performed by any individuals of the human race; for all these are in some respects accounted beautiful or sublime.

In the apprehension of mankind, therefore, there must be some quality common to all these objects, called their beauty or their sublimity; and hence it must be supposed that a tune upon the fiddle, and a profound speculation, both of which are at times termed beautiful, possess some circumstance in which they correspond. This strange and almost boundless diversity, which appears to exist in what are called objects of taste, has proved not a little perplexing to speculative men, from the difficulty of discovering a fixed point of resemblance among them. Metaphysical writers have very gene-

rally attempted to get quit of the difficulty, by representing taste as a peculiar quality or feeling, which is bestowed by Nature only upon certain individuals of the human race, and which is in itself altogether different from the understanding or the faculty by which, in other cases, we discover truth, or distinguish the qualities of objects. It has also been a celebrated question among these writers, Whether taste is altogether arbitrary, or whether there is any standard to which its decisions may be referred? From this notion that taste is somehow different from reason, or is a peculiar sentiment planted only in some favoured minds, arose the idea that there is no real beauty in objects; and that "thus Nature formed me to feel," is a sufficient justification of the taste of every separate individual. Hence too arose the opinion so generally maintained (from Longinus to Dr Blair), that the taste of the greatest number must be sought as the test of what is beautiful; not because the greatest number of minds will probably form the most accurate judgment of truth, but because the feelings of the multitude must necessarily be the feelings of our nature; as what they call salt, must be salt; and what they call bitter, cannot be sweet.

That the peculiar exertion of the mind, called *taste*, may be correctly understood, it will be necessary to recur to some of the principles for-

merly stated. It was remarked, that the human mind approves or disapproves of the productions of art, of the objects of nature, and of the actions of men; or imputes to them perfection or defect, in proportion to the degree in which they afford an opportunity of displaying the presence and the efforts of an enlightened and vigorous, or of a defective and degraded mind. It may now be farther remarked, that the objects which we highly approve, we also regard with pleasure; and that those objects which are considered as defective or worthless, are regarded with dissatisfaction or uneasiness; or, in other words, that the perception of excellence is a pleasing perception, and the perception of defect and unworthiness is painful. The cause of these last feelings may be thus explained:

It was formerly observed, that all efforts of voluntary power or attention, and of clear and distinct perception or discernment of the qualities of objects, are of a satisfactory or pleasing nature; whereas overstrained exertions of attention or will, and perplexed and unsuccessful efforts of the judgment, or perceptive faculty, are painful. Thus intellectual excellence, when existing in ourselves, or exerted by us, is productive of pleasure. This pleasure is recorded in the memory, and the recollection of it is pleasing. When we perceive in other persons' actions or efforts of art, which appear to pro-

used from similar intellectual perfection or successful exertions of thought or power, we recollect and enjoy anew the pleasure which we ourselves have derived from such exertions: On the contrary, a painful recollection is produced by the discernment of defective and unsuccessful efforts, which suggest the idea of weakness and imperfection of intellect.

At a very early period of life, also, we perceive the superiority over inanimate objects which is possessed by intelligent beings, or by mind; that to it felicity, power, and every valuable quality belong; and that from its improvement all the advantages of which our situation is capable are derived. It is also in the society of human beings, that is, of other minds, that all our pleasures originate. Hence the value of mind, and of its best qualities, is deeply fixed in the memory. It is likewise to be remarked, that in every case in which we perceive that an exertion has been made of valuable intellectual qualities, the pleasure is enjoyed which results from the attention being excited in a lively degree; a circumstance which occurs from discerning the traces or the presence of talents, of which we have learned the importance. The contemplation of such talents also gives pleasure; because the very effort of mind by which we perceive their worth, is itself both an act of successful discernment, and a proof of our own acuteness of mind; or is

a source of self-applause, that is, of the additional pleasure which self-love (a sentiment to be afterwards explained) produces in the mind.

From all these circumstances combined, it gradually becomes a fixed principle or quality of the human mind to take delight in the contemplation of mind, or to love itself and its own likeness. Hence it regards with pleasure every exertion of acute discernment and of voluntary power. These characters and these actions are contemplated with pleasure which exhibit proofs of great knowledge or discernment or self-command, or which display the presence of much mind or greatness of intellect: on the contrary, it becomes the nature of mind to dislike, and to regard with uneasiness or pain, whatever exhibits marks of undue imbecility, ignorance, want of discernment, or imperfection of intellect.

On examining the various objects of taste, it will be found, that what is called their beauty is only another name for their perfection. It consists of the skill and energy, or of the degree of intellectual excellence, that appears displayed on any occasion, or in the formation of any object. An object is called beautiful when it is excellent of its kind, or when a high degree of wisdom appears to have been exerted in its production. The pleasure with which it is regarded, is nothing else than the satisfaction which at-

tends the contemplation of perfection, or of the valuable qualities of mind which the object has afforded an opportunity of displaying. If the excellence of an object is uncommonly great, so as to require a considerable effort to discern its whole worth, and all the skill and power which are manifested by means of it, such an object is said to be more than beautiful,—it is sublime. The opposite of beauty is deformity or imperfection; the opposite of sublimity is meanness, or extraordinary defectiveness.

I shall endeavour to illustrate this principle (which was very nearly the doctrine of the ancient Socratic school), that what is called the beauty of an object, or of an action, is nothing more than its excellence, or the degree of intellectual worth which it has afforded an opportunity of exhibiting.

The most distinguished and remarkable of all the objects of taste are the virtuous actions of men. Upon these the historian and the poet dwell with enthusiasm. The perseverance, the self-denial, the intrepidity, the elevation of mind amidst calamities, and the contempt of every illiberal interest which are possessed by the eminently virtuous, form the favourite subjects by which the tragic muse arrests the attention and the sympathy of those who live in situations far removed from the scene of action described: These subjects interest our affections, and call

forth a degree of admiration far superior to what any part of inanimate nature can ever excite.

Look then abroad thro' Nature, to the range  
Of planets, suns, and adamantine spheres  
Wheeling unshaken, thro' the void immense;  
And speak, O man! does this capacious scene,  
With half that kindling majesty, dilate  
Thy strong conception, as when Brutus rose  
Refulgent from the stroke of Cæsar's fate,  
Amid the croud of patriots; and his arm  
Aloft extending, like eternal Jove  
When guilt brings down the thunder, call'd aloud  
On Tully's name, and shook his crimson steel,  
And bad the father of his country, hail!

————— Is aught so fair  
In all the dewy landscapes of the spring,  
In the bright eye of Hesper or the morn,  
In Nature's fairest forms, is aught so fair  
As virtuous friendship? As the candid blush  
Of him who strives with fortune to be just?  
The graceful tear that streams for other's woes?  
Or the mild majesty of private life?

PLEASURES OF IMAGINATION, B. I. l. 487.

It does not seem difficult to explain how it comes to pass that the virtuous actions of men interest us more than the beauties of inanimate nature, although the skill that is exerted in the formation of natural objects unquestionably ex-

ceeds all degrees of intelligence that in any case can be exerted by man. In the case of virtuous actions, the efforts of mind, its struggles, and its worth, are more distinctly perceived than in the case of natural objects, and are, therefore, more strongly sympathized with; for we find it more easy to compare our own feelings with the feelings of other men, than to sympathize with the thoughts and the skill of the Creator of the universe. We know the difficulty and the exertion of mind that is necessary to enable us to act with integrity on all occasions; but we can form no idea of the exertion requisite to the making of a world. And hence, although we perceive that much intelligence must be necessary to the accomplishment of such a work; yet, on ordinary occasions, we perceive it with an indistinctness which diminishes our sense of its value, and therefore leads us to take an inferior interest in the contemplation of it.

It is justly said of some characters and of some actions that they are lovely and amiable, or sublime and noble, and that it is impossible to know them without delight and admiration; but on all such occasions, if we examine in what the loveliness and dignity, or beauty and sublimity of an action consist, these qualities will be found to amount to nothing more than the degree of perfection, or supposed perfection of mind that is to say, of Wisdom and self-command.



that it displays. The glory of the Greeks who fell with Leonidas at Thermopylæ consists "of this, that, laying aside the ordinary weakness of mankind, they sacrificed their lives for the double purpose of exhibiting to their countrymen, who were then divided and wavering, an example of generous and honourable conduct, and of intimidating a powerful invading enemy, by giving him reason to believe that their country must be depopulated before it could be subdued, and that no extent of numbers would be adequate to such a task. The severity of the Spartan matron, who shut her doors against her own son, because he had fled from Thermopylæ, the justice of the elder Brutus, the public spirit of Regulus, the continence of Scipio, and the firmness of Cato of Utica,—have all been admired, because they were considered as examples of an enlightened self-command, or of a disregard for ordinary feelings, when placed in competition with interests, of which the mind approves. If it is ever found that an action, apparently splendid, has been performed from hypocritical or irrational purposes, or from any thing else than a resolute and enlightened spirit; the admiration with which it was regarded instantly ceases; a circumstance which alone sufficiently demonstrates the truth of the proposition already stated; or, that every action is regarded with pleasure, and is accounted sublime

or beautiful only in proportion to the excellence or the perfection of mind from which it is believed to proceed.

The works of Nature are considered as exhibiting much beauty; but on attending to the subject correctly, it will be found that their beauty consists solely of their excellence, or of the skill, and power or energy, that have been exerted in their formation; nor is any beauty perceived without a discernment of skilful contrivance and arrangement displayed in them. A beautiful man or woman is nothing more than an individual, whose person is singularly well formed and adapted for all the purposes of nature. Defect and deformity, in this particular case, obviously correspond. So true is this, that the finest form seems to wither while we gaze upon it, if we are informed that it is affected by any latent disease or constitutional defect. The same rule applies to all plants and animals. Thus beauty consists of the perfection of their constitution, or of the skill successfully displayed in their formation. Hence health is always beautiful, and disease is always the reverse.

When we contemplate the universe at large as an immense machine, and consider the excellent adaptation of all its parts to each other; how the air, the land, and the sea are accommodated to the nature of their various inhabitants; how the eyes of animals are suited to

the degree of light they are to encounter; their lungs to the air they must breathe; their constitutions to the heat they must endure, and the food by which they are to subsist; and how their organs are contrived for their security, and for the supply of their wants,—it is impossible not to perceive that all around us is beautiful and sublime! But, in this case, the pleasure derived from sublimity and beauty results altogether from the supposition which we make, that the universe is the work of a skilful mind, the contemplation of whose contrivance gives us pleasure. Leave out this supposition, and let the universe be considered as a casual jumble of elements, without order or permanency, which may fall into a different form in an instant, and its beauty immediately vanishes.

When a man hears a discourse pronounced in a foreign tongue which he does not understand, he perceives nothing but confusion and unmeaning sounds, which can give no pleasure: And when a man, who discerns no design or contrivance in the works of Nature, contemplates the universe, he is necessarily in the same situation. A man of learning, who understands the foreign language, in which a discourse is delivered, may perceive that the speaker utters many eloquent and beautiful expressions, many profound reflections, many ingenious contrivances, and many bold imaginations. In the

same manner, by regarding the works of Nature, with this translation of their meaning, that they are the productions of a powerful and a skilful mind, they instantly become beautiful. A man of understanding, contemplating the mighty fabric of the universe, is pleased, because he perceives that a skilful astronomer has been there, and has arranged the plan of its movements; in the forms of animals, he can see that every mechanical invention has been exhausted by the wise anatomists, who contrived their various functions; in the changes, by composition and resolution that continually occur through Nature, he can discern the skill of an accomplished chemist; in the mingled colours that adorn to the eye the productions of Nature, he can discern the art of a painter; and he can hear the performance of a musician in the music of the fields and woods: For, like the words of a foreign tongue, the material objects contained in this universe have no beauty, and they are contemplated with no pleasure, excepting in so far as it is perceived that they express the thoughts and contrivances of their author; and this expression constitutes at once their beauty and their excellence.

Similar beauty is also seen in the order of providence, or in that combination of wants and of passions by which man is induced at one

period to build up, and at another to pull down; first to erect and support the arrangements of society with much anxiety, and thereafter to assault and destroy them with much rage; at one time to tear in pieces with contempt every monument of art, and at another to regret the loss which his barbarous fury has occasioned; and at every period of his history to exhibit a scene of various exertion, which is most admired by those who best understand its tendency, to produce and exhibit all the possible varieties of intellect of which human nature is capable. Amidst the apparent disorder of these moral elements, the efforts may be discerned of a skilful teacher training up minds, even in the most unfavourable circumstances; to the possession of much energy. For it is not by literature and wise institutions alone that the human mind is improved. By calamities and poverty the untutored savage is enabled to acquire a degree of self-command that renders him superior to fear and tortures, and a degree of sagacity often little inferior to that which is produced by an elaborate education. In every case, however, it is only in so far as the arrangements of Providence appear skilful and well contrived for the accomplishment of a valuable purpose, that they are accounted beautiful, or are considered with admiration: When no purpose or wise design can be discovered, they lose this quality.

In what are called the fine arts, it is always in proportion to the degree in which the object of a particular art is perfectly and skilfully attained; or in which mind appears, that beauty and sublimity are understood to exist. The regular notes of music are supposed to be nothing more than the \* tones by which the human voice expresses kindness, courage, pity, affection, and other agreeable sentiments. These notes are said to be pleasing or beautiful; because they suggest the recollection of pleasing sentiments, or intellectual qualities. The sounds by which anger, peevishness, discord, and every unkind sentiment are expressed, are always disagreeable; because they recal to the memory unpleasing ideas. Hence the words concord, discord, and harmony, are applied to musical sounds. What is called time in music is pleasing; because it marks the constant interference of an active and thinking being; and because it tends to increase the expression of sentiment produced by the sounds, by introducing the ideas associated with quick and slow motion. Thus music is a sort of imperfect language, which expresses human feelings and passions, but nothing more.

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See Reid on the Intellectual Powers, and Alison on Taste.

When all the important sentiments of the human mind have been expressed in regular combinations of sounds or musical compositions, the art of music is complete. In this situation, when artists can produce nothing new in point of expression, they endeavour to excite the admiration of their hearers by the execution of what is difficult. Hence the music of early ages is simple and full of expression; that of later times is astonishing and intricate. In early times, men admire the expression of human sentiments; at a later period, they admire the skill of the performer, or rather of the composer, who employs a dozen instruments at once to express, by their combined efforts, what was formerly expressed by the human voice alone. But in every case it is skill, or the exertion and the presence of mind, that is accounted beautiful; the skilful expression of sentiment, or the skilful execution of what is difficult.

Two circumstances render poetry pleasing: the nature of the subjects it celebrates, and the skill of the poet. When a perspicuous description is given of the actions of the just, the brave, and the good, we listen to it with delight; and this delight is the same with our admiration, or love of perfection of mind. We are pleased with these qualities when we see them exerted, and we are pleased with them also in description.

The art of the poet is displayed in several ways. His language is measured ; a circumstance which suggests the idea of his skill, and gives to it that expression of levity or of gravity which the time produces in music. He sometimes also accompanies it with music, to increase its power of expressing human feelings. The poet takes advantage, in his style, of the illusions of imagination, and represents the names of events, or of trains of thought, as realities. He talks of fame, and time, and death, and other general expressions, as if they were real beings, and describes their fictitious adventures with amusing art. His chief resource, however, consists in endeavouring to suggest singular and unexpected resemblances betwixt objects. His hero is bold as the lion ; irresistible as the rock falling from the brow of the mountain : His voice is loud as the thunder, and terrible as the ocean in a storm : He is swift of foot as the hind, and steadfast as the promontory encountering the waves : His shield is like the moon ; his sword like the descending lightning ; and his spear is like a pine-tree cut from the grove. Even when the poet describes a bad character, which we cannot love, we may still be pleased with the accuracy of the description, or with the unexpected resemblances that are pointed out, and which form the splendid imagery in which it is expressed.



Poetry is arrived at perfection when the most interesting human characters or actions have been well described, and when the most striking similitudes have been exhausted. That they may be exhausted, is obvious; for the terms which can be personified, and the objects of comparison, are limited in number; and after a certain period of their history, mankind always justly complain that their poets have no longer any originality. The art is accordingly, in a great measure, dropped; and men, in search of novelty, have recourse to prose, whose music is more various than that of poetry; and to the pursuits of science, which have no termination. In poetry, however, as well as in music, we see that intelligence and beauty are the same; and that the source of our admiration is either in the excellent characters described, or in the skill with which the poet executes his description.

Painting and statuary consist of the imitation of nature. The more perfect the imitation is rendered, the work of the artist is accounted the more beautiful. The painter may employ himself like the poet in representing actions that never took place, or characters that never existed; but still the beauty of his work will always be in proportion to the art with which he represents human passions and sentiments. Painting may be altered, like music, from its original destination, if the artist, instead of representing

Nature as she is, or ought to be, shall labour to exhibit the splendour of colours or the delicacy of his pencil.

In architecture, when a private house is to be built, conveniency and utility are always beautiful, and whatever is inconvenient is always a deformity ; that is to say, good sense is always beautiful, and folly or imperfection is always deformed. In a public building, the appearance of a great exertion of power is equivalent to sublimity. Hence trifling ornaments are directed to be avoided, and a great simple surface to be exhibited.

In gardening, men are sometimes pleased with trim hedges, clipped yews, straight avenues, and the *smooth-shaven green* ; at other times they wish to imitate the simplicity of nature : but in all cases it is art and skill that is accounted beautiful, though art is sometimes exerted to display and sometimes to conceal itself. It may be observed, however, that as a garden is always an effort of much art, men never persist long in giving it a careless appearance ; and hence our present serpentine walks have gradually assumed an appearance not less artificial than the straight avenues of our forefathers.

In every case good sense or justness of design is always accounted a requisite of beauty. A house that seems built on a foundation more slender than the superstructure requires, always

appears deformed. A tree in foliage, however, appears a great object resting on a small basis; but as we know this foundation to be sure, and to be the form requisite for perfection and strength, we regard it as beautiful. If one large picture and two small ones are to be hung on a wall, the most beautiful manner of hanging them will be to place the large one in the middle and a small one on each side. Upon what principle does the beauty of this arrangement depend? The answer is not difficult; it depends upon the appearance of design or thought. Were the pictures hung in any other manner, they would appear to have been placed at random and by mere hazard; whereas, in the other case, whoever comes to the spot, will readily perceive, and find pleasure in observing, that a rational being has been here, and that mind or design has been exerted. It is upon this principle that order is beautiful; because it always marks some degree of that skill or design which forms the perfection of our nature; and order often consists merely in so placing objects that their situation may seem the effect of art or contrivance, and not of unthinking chance.

These few remarks sufficiently show that the quality possessed by such various objects, called their beauty, is nothing else than their perfection, or the intelligence that they afford an opportunity of displaying. To the vulgar the

thunder is extremely sublime, because they regard it as the voice of God, and as an effort of great power; to the wise, who regard it merely as the means of rectifying a disorder in the distribution of the elements, it is less so: but the rising sun appears sublime to the wise, who know its magnitude and the important place it is made to hold in the great fabric of the universe. The flowers of the field are accounted beautiful, on account of the delicate art with which their colours are mingled; but a mathematical demonstration is beautiful also, if it is well contrived, and ascertain truth with clearness and precision. An orator may, with much art, persuade his audience that his sentiments are true: but a surgeon may perform an operation with equal art; and to those who understand the difficulties which both must encounter, equal degrees of art will appear equally beautiful. Thus the idea of beauty may be annexed to whatever is most disgusting, providing only there be skill or wisdom exerted: and thus, as before observed, even dunghills and anatomical preparations may come to be regarded with pleasure, because they afford an opportunity of displaying skill or intelligence.

To avoid misapprehension, however, it may be necessary to remark, that although beauty and perfection imply the same qualities in the object to which they are ascribed, yet they

are not, and ought not in general, to be accounted synonymous terms in language. The former is meant to express the pleasure which the contemplation of an object produces in the mind; whereas the word perfection relates to its worth, or the degree of skill displayed in its formation. When we observe, for the first time, an object which is said to be perfect and beautiful, the terms may have precisely the same meaning; or they may express at once our discernment of its worth, and the pleasure which the contemplation of that worth excites. But as the excess of sensibility in the perceptive faculty which constitutes pleasure gradually subsides by repetition, the object is at last coldly said to be approved of; that is, we still admit its value, but we cease to be affected by it as an object of taste from which pleasure is to be derived. The term beauty is also most frequently applied to external appearances; because of their excellence all persons can readily judge.

It is to be observed, however, that certain objects are often improperly called sublime or beautiful; not because they actually are so, but merely because they produce a degree of pleasure somewhat resembling that which is produced by the contemplation of excellence. Thus a ruined building is often called beautiful or sublime. The last, indeed, it may be, if it is very vast, and seem to have been reared by an

effort of great power, or, which is the same thing, by much and long exerted skill; but it cannot be beautiful. The sight of such an object, however, often gives rise to a train of reflections that are productive of pleasure; it calls up the memory of what we have heard of the greatness and the enterprises of former ages, and leads us to think of desolation, and change, and the lapse of years, and of the destiny which gradually consumes the generations of men and their finest works. The mind, when entertaining these ideas, is pleased with itself, and with the subjects of its meditation, and consequently enjoys a satisfaction very similar to that which is produced by the contemplation of what is actually beautiful or sublime: We are, therefore, apt to call it by the same name; and, ascribing our pleasure to the object which only afforded the occasion of its being called forth, we sometimes incorrectly call such an object beautiful. The scenes where our youth was spent readily excite many pleasing recollections; and we are apt, in the same manner, to call these scenes beautiful, though to a stranger they have no such appearance, and, in truth, possess no such quality. He who suddenly looks from the summit of a precipice, is apt to experience a confusion of mind similar to what is felt on contemplating the effects of astonishing wisdom or power; and thus the view from a great height is improperly

called sublime. Thus also, whatever is moderately terrible, is apt to receive the same appellation. A calm evening, by exciting pleasing and happy thoughts in the mind of one man, will be called beautiful by him; whereas, by calling forth solemn and serious thoughts, it will be called sublime by another. It is a general rule with regard to these objects which are not truly beautiful or sublime in themselves, but which are only called so because they excite certain trains of thought, that scarcely two persons are precisely agreed concerning their effect; and that even the same person, at different periods of his life, or perhaps at a different hour of the day, will not have the same emotions excited by them.

It is to be observed, that besides beauty and sublimity, the human mind also perceives and derives pleasure from the contemplation of other qualities of objects, such as their novelty or ridiculousness, and that the perception of these qualities is accounted a branch of taste.

New and unexpected appearances are observed with pleasure, because they rouse the mind, or excite attention in a high degree, and all activity is pleasing. In the pursuit of truth, what is new must please; for this additional reason, that it brings along with it a consciousness of increasing intelligence.

An object is ridiculous when it exhibits an un-

expected and obviously absurd combination of things or ideas. Such combinations please by their unexpectedness, and by the self-applause which the spectator feels when he perceives something to which he accounts himself superior. Hence in polite society nobody laughs, nor is laughed at, on account of the assumption of superiority which is always implied on the part of those who laugh!

I NEXT proceed to consider how far the cultivation of taste ought to be regarded as a duty, or as a valuable kind of self-improvement.

We have seen that taste, at least the taste for what is beautiful or sublime, is the exertion of the understanding in discerning the labours of mind or intellect, and the degree of perfection that appears in these labours, and consequently in the minds from which they proceed. The cultivation of taste, then, when extensively understood, is the study of Moral Science, or of the perfections and defects of intelligent beings. By exerting it, we seat ourselves in judgment upon the works both of God and man, and inquire into the degree of skill that has been displayed in them. Taste is not an arbitrary sentiment, but an exertion of sound judgment. To acquire good taste is to acquire skill in any art; and want of taste implies ignorance or want of discernment.



So far, therefore, as Taste consists of the investigation of the excellencies which appear in the works of Nature and in the characters of men, its importance cannot be doubted: but it is a different question, in what degree of estimation we ought to hold a taste or skill in the productions of the fine arts of poetry, painting, and music?

Among the ancient Greeks the art of music appears to have been held in the most extravagant estimation. Their different states were not only at immense expence in supporting magnificent theatres for musical exhibitions, to which all the people were invited, but they instituted public festivals, at which whole nations assembled, and in which music is said to have formed the chief entertainment. Musicians were in high esteem, and obtained the most splendid rewards for their services. Statesmen and princes were ambitious of being numbered among them. Homer represents Achilles as occupying his leisure in singing the praises of the gods and heroes; and Solon, the Athenian legislator, is said to have sung upon the stage. The Spartans adhered with no less scrupulous exactness to the music of their ancestors than they did to the laws of Lycurgus, and even punished an artist for attempting to debauch the musical taste of their youth by adding a new string to the lyre. The well-informed and sensible his-

torian Polybius, gravely speaks of a Grecian people, called the Cynatheans, as a vile and barbarous race whom all Greece detested, and whose destruction was justly beheld with pleasure, because, forsooth, they had no taste for music, and had no musical entertainments. He *ascribes their degeneracy and wickedness wholly to this circumstance.* Aristotle speaks no less highly of the importance of music; and Plato, in his plan of a republic, allots no less than three years of every young person's life to the study of music.

All this now appears very extraordinary. Among us it would add nothing to the reputation of a statesman, a philosopher, or a warrior, to have it said that he plays well upon the fiddle. Musical talents are so often accompanied with stupidity and ignorance, and the degree of serious estimation in which they are held, is so very moderate, that the possession of them in a high degree almost excites a prejudice against a man's intellectual character, and often induces men of spirit and ambition rather to conceal than to display the acquisition of them. In consequence of the luxury of courts and of great cities, musical performers do indeed, in modern times, often derive splendid emoluments from their profession; but the place which they hold in society is not the most respectable, and their political importance has entirely ceased.

It even appears a question of some difficulty, whether, in the present state of the world, the anxious farther cultivation of the fine arts is of any real importance to society?

In Scotland, for two hundred years past, we have had almost none of these arts. We have no splendid musical establishments. We have banished music from our religion; and it is little valued either by the enterprising or the speculative part of the nation. We have had a few good painters, but little attention has been paid to their works. We have few collections of paintings; and our most intelligent men have no knowledge of the beauties of the art, and give it none of their attention. Our poets have also been few; because poetry is held in little estimation, and the cultivation of the art is accounted a waste of time that produces no respectability.

Yet the Scots are so far from being a barbarous people, that their country has been one of the most fertile nurseries of intelligent and accomplished men. Not only are those who remain at home of a sober and well-informed character, but crowds of well educated and active young men are daily issuing forth to all quarters of the globe; and by their literature and their assiduity, obtaining possession of important stations in every country. It is evident, therefore, that in modern times at least, as high a de-

gree of civilization and of intellectual improvement as has yet appeared in the world, may exist where the fine arts are almost entirely neglected.

The great cause of the attachment of the ancient civilized nations to the fine arts, and especially to music, was their want of books, or of literature. All their poems were set to music and sung. Aristotle declares that tragedy is of no value without music. Their hymns in praise of the gods were sung by the priests: Their histories were set to music also, and sung by the bards or poets: Their laws were songs, which the legislators set to popular music, and which were sung by the people: The great actions and sentiments of illustrious men were celebrated in verse; and all verse was connected with music.

In ancient times, therefore, to say that a people had no music, was to say no less than that they had no laws, no religion, no literature, no history, no elevated moral sentiments or examples of illustrious deeds. In short, the want of music was equivalent to the want of civilization and of all intellectual improvement. Accordingly the ancient republics were extremely attentive to the state of music; or, which is the same thing, to the publication of the laws of the country, and of the religion and literature of the age. Having few books, the people had few other

means of instruction than the theatres, which were maintained at the public cost. The laws were recited in them; the gods were praised in them; the praises of heroes and illustrious men were sung; and all great events celebrated in them. To aid the effect of poetry and music, painting and sculpture were introduced. That the sentiments of religion and of public spirit might take deep root in the minds of the citizens, immense rewards were given by the state to artists who produced beautiful paintings and statues of the gods, or of men of distinguished patriotism. Nations that did not adopt these means of public instruction were accounted barbarians, and must in a great measure have actually been so.

In modern times, the state of things is much altered, chiefly in consequence of the invention of printing. It is no longer necessary to make laws in verse, and to sing them to the people, that they may be remembered and known. They can be written in a book; and many thousand copies can be distributed to be consulted at leisure. History, religion, and morality, are all discussed in books; which are multiplied, and put into the hands of every individual. Theatres are left to the gay and the frivolous. The serious lovers of literature, the possessors of true science and taste, withdraw to their closets; and in them are more rationally and profoundly instructed in the history of mankind, and the

knowledge of religion and of nature, than they could have been amidst the distraction of a numerous assembly, by the artificial language of poetry, however adorned or rendered pleasing. The fine arts, therefore, are not now so necessary to the improvement of the human mind as they anciently were; and have therefore justly fallen into greater neglect. Even in ancient times something of this kind occurred. It was gradually found that all poets were not capable of singing their own verses, nor all musicians of becoming poets. It was also found that both poetry and music were injured by too close a connection. Poetry and music, therefore, became distinct arts. Some wrote verses, and others sung them. Both arts were improved; but both lost their political importance. Music, especially instrumental music, became an intricate art; but the musician lost his respectability, because he no longer uttered his own thoughts, or rather, in the use of an instrument, he could utter no thoughts at all. Poetry, no longer fettered by music, became more rational and elaborate, and approached more nearly to prose. As wealth increased, and books multiplied, poetry was studied, as now, in solitude by many who disregarded music. Men of talents also began to cast off the fetters of numbers, and to write in prose. Thus, in proportion to the degree in which literature abounded and

was improved, the fine arts lost their value and their influence.

The use of the fine arts, then, seems to be this: When men are altogether barbarous and ignorant, it is of much importance to prevail with them to exert their faculties with regard even to the most trifling objects. A marvellous tale told them in a song produces this effect. All the efforts of the fine arts are addressed to the passions. It is necessary they should be so to excite the attention of barbarians. They have only an indirect tendency, therefore, to render mankind rational. They foster and soothe the passions of love, ambition, and vanity; but they also teach men to admire skill and ability, and to take delight in something else than war, gaming, gluttony, and idleness, which are the vices of all savages. As succeeding artists improve upon each other, their countrymen become more discerning and skilful, till at last a great proportion of mankind learn to take delight in the exertion of thought, and in the pursuits of literature and of knowledge. When this object is accomplished, the fine arts have done their duty; and an important duty it is, seeing they are the means of alluring the human race to the pursuit of intellectual improvement. In themselves, however, and without regard to this object, they are of little real value; for a man is not a more excel-

lent being when his ears are tickled by music than when he hears it not ; and we derive no greater improvement from an important truth, when it is conveyed to us in rhyme, than when it is conveyed in prose. To be a good judge of painting or of music, a man must no doubt possess a certain degree of intellect ; but this degree is so moderate, and is capable of being acquired in so many other ways in a literary age, that the production of it, by means of these arts, affords no adequate reward for their laborious cultivation.

I cannot help observing that, in the history of mankind, superstition and the fine arts go hand in hand, and mutually support each other. The poetry, painting, music, and architecture, of the Greeks and Romans were chiefly employed in the service of the popular mythology or idolatrous religion of these nations ; and it was by the liberality of superstitious devotees that these arts were supported. In the same manner, the superstition of the church of Rome was the chief support of the fine arts in Europe. But it is the nature of these arts to undermine, like the ivy, the fabric to which they cling. By gradually instructing the human race to exercise their powers of reflection, they taught men to despise a degrading superstition ; and at the same time to engage in the investigation of truth and of nature, which supersedes the desire of the ~~ex-~~



hibition of human art. The church of Rome has fallen, or is falling, because the very arts which it supported, and by which it was for a time upheld, taught men to exert their reason, and to press forward to that science which is more valuable than it or them. These arts will decline in Europe along with the superstitious establishment, whose patronage supported their splendour. But the example of Scotland, and of other protestant countries, shews that, if literature is generally cultivated, the intellectual interests of mankind will suffer nothing by the loss.

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## CHAR. V.

### CAUSES OF ERROR IN SCIENCE.

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WHEN we perceive the existence of any object, or that it resembles or differs from another object, this act is treasured up in the memory, and thereafter we express the recollection of such previous perceptions by the word *belief*. We say that we believe in the existence of a particular object, or that it possesses certain qualities. Hence, if the human understanding be an in-

strument correctly formed for the discernment of truth, and if memory be a correct record of its judgments, it would seem that no erroneous belief or opinion ought to find its way into the human mind. This, however, is very far from being the state of the fact ; and it may be proper here, very shortly, to take notice of some of the chief modes in which speculative errors obtain existence.

1st, The very limited nature of the human constitution exposes the understanding to great hazard of forming erroneous decisions. It is seldom that the objects which are to be compared can be perceived by the senses at the same period of time. If they are placed in distant situations, and cannot be brought together, or if a past is to be compared with a present event, as the weather of the last with that of the present season, the intervention of memory becomes absolutely necessary ; and one of the objects at least can only be perceived as existing in that record. Hence, if the object or event was originally attended to in a negligent manner, or not sufficiently reflected upon, the traces of it may have faded, and the comparison will be imperfectly made.

2d, From the difficulty of retaining in the memory the whole individual objects that we observe in Nature, we are induced to arrange them or their qualities into classes ; but from

the limited nature of our observation, there is always a hazard that these classes may be imperfect ; and, that what we consider as general qualities may be nothing more than the properties of a few individuals. Thus a man who had never seen any metals excepting iron, copper, and lead, might readily be induced to say, and to believe, that *all* metals are liable to rust, or to become tarnished by exposure to the air ; although this is not true with regard to another metal, gold, which he is supposed not to have seen.

3d. Of a similar nature is the presumption, whereby men endeavour by conjecture to explain all science. Thus, we are placed on the surface of a globe of 25,000 miles in circumference, into which we have dug some pits a few hundred feet in depth. Upon the strength of these researches abundance of ingenious persons have undertaken to explain the whole history and structure of the globe ; how and when it was fashioned ; what revolutions it has undergone ; and all the changes it will hereafter experience. These speculations are called *theories of the earth*, and similar theories have, in every branch of science, retarded the progress of discovery, by withdrawing men from the drudgery of observing facts, and filling their minds with unreal, but amusing imaginations.

4th. The passions of men are, on all occasions, a powerful source of error in judgment. Their na-

ture will be afterwards explained ; but in the mean time it may here be remarked, that by fixing their objects very powerfully in the memory, and thereby diminishing our self-command, they prevent the understanding from steadily considering their nature. Thus the objects of fear become exaggerated ; and from reflecting much upon the objects of hope, we are led to forget the difficulties which stand in the way of their attainment, and greatly to undervalue these difficulties.

*5th.* But no source of error is equal to that which results from the influence of society. It has been remarked, that even the organ of language, by which men hold communication, exposes them to error and mutual misinterpretation. Such, however, is the limited endurance of human life, and the narrow extent of the observation of individuals, that it becomes absolutely necessary to the acquisition of knowledge, that we give credit to the testimony of others. An European, who never left his own country, has no other means of becoming acquainted with the existence of the rattle-snake, the shark, and the rhinoceros, than through the medium of the observation and report of others. In like manner, our acquaintance with past ages must necessarily come through the same channel. Thus in becoming acquainted with facts, the errors of those to whom we trust are apt to become our errors.

This is not all. In consequence of the absolute necessity of confiding at times in human testimony, we gradually acquire the habit of believing that to be true which we are told is so. Our parents and friends endeavour to impress upon our minds many notions which they regard as important truths. We are accustomed to take their word for most things; and we very readily take upon the same authority the religious and moral maxims which they inculcate. Thus by the time he is grown up in life, every man believes a variety of opinions, adopted without discussion, or without any act of discernment of his own; which he has no better reason for believing than merely that he has been told they are true, and that every person around him believes as he does.

It is to be observed, however, that this sort of belief is an operation of the mind very different from that already described, or from the exercise of the understanding in discerning truth, and in recollecting such acts of discernment. The kind of belief now under consideration amounts to nothing more than the formation of a lively idea of what we are told, without any examination of its nature.

One of the most remarkable ways in which society influences the belief or opinions of individuals appears in the effect of custom, or of what is called *fashion* (a principle to be afterwards noticed); in consequence of which men

gradually learn to regard the greatest absurdities with respect. By means of it, the admiration which power, riches, and talents produce, is communicated, in some measure, to the conduct of their possessors, and prevents our judging accurately of their actions. We are likewise apt to be led by what we see passing around us into a general error, with regard to the nature of moral knowledge. Instead of considering it as an acquaintance with what men ought to be, we are apt to regard the human character as stationary, and as exhibiting, in our own age and country, all the worth which it was ever formed to attain. We consider the arrangements of society, and the mode of education which prevails in it, in the same light in which we do the course of the seasons, and the revolutions of the heavenly bodies, as unchangeably fixed by Nature, and we respect them as a part of her laws. In this light a Hindoo or a Chinese considers the ancient arrangements of the society to which he belongs.

The chief source, however, of the errors produced by society result from the partialities which men acquire amidst their intercourse with each other. In political contests, for example, a man frequently finds himself engaged by his interest, his vanity, or his affections, to *wish* to find his party or his associates always in the right. Hence he is apt to *try* to convince himself of the pro-

propriety of their measures, to associate them in his memory with interests and notions to which he is firmly attached, and to endeavour to think them all very right. He usually succeeds in ultimately deceiving himself, or in producing in his own understanding a total inattention to the impropriety of the conduct adopted by his friends. He even sometimes proceeds the length of committing pious frauds in their favour; that is, he exaggerates their good actions, and calumniates their antagonists. This mode of imposing upon the understanding is practised very frequently upon religious subjects. All religious sects have represented the belief of their tenets as highly meritorious, and even as absolutely necessary to obtain the favour of the divinity. Hence weak persons, under the influence of the fear of punishment, or the fervent hope of future felicity, are apt to try, with all their might, to believe the notions inculcated by their teachers, that by so doing they may avoid the endless misery with which they are threatened, or obtain the happiness that is held out to them. This effort to believe consists only, as already mentioned, of an exertion of imagination to form a lively idea of the opinions inculcated, and of an effort to avoid admitting into the thoughts any notion contradictory to these opinions. Were it any thing else, it would be unnecessary to urge the necessity of belief, or to enforce it by appealing to

the hopes and fears of men. When we are convinced of the truth of any fact or principle, we cannot avoid believing it. It is, only when we have received a notion without evidence, reflection, or examination, that we are in danger of falling into scepticism.

6th. Moral science, however, is exposed to difficulties peculiar to itself, which deserve more particular attention; because they almost necessarily produce misapprehension and error. The operations of the human mind, the modes in which it is improved, and the degrees of improvement which it is capable of attaining, can only be known from time and much observation. An individual cannot acquire such knowledge merely by reflecting upon what occurs within himself; because the situations in which one individual is placed are always limited in point of variety. But as the human mind is trained up and fashioned by the exertions it is led to make, the difficulties it encounters, the passions it feels, and the means of observation which it enjoys;—the variety of accomplishments which it is capable of acquiring, and the best means of improving it, can never be known from the example of a single character; as it is always possible that, under a different education, the same mind might have attained to higher degrees of intelligence. It is only by extensive observation, therefore, of the various aspects assumed by the human mind, under every



variety of circumstances, arising from soil, climate, laws, and public or social arrangements, that its nature and capacities can be fully known. But the opportunity of making such observation does not depend upon the skill of any individual; because we cannot place others in the various situations necessary to illustrate the intellectual progress which they are capable of making. This is a work which must be left to be accomplished by Providence during a succession of ages. Even after every requisite has occurred, and human society has existed during some thousand years in a great variety of forms, still it is very possible that much of its history may have been misunderstood. Mind is always invisible; and the circumstances which ostensibly influence the conduct, and the destiny of individuals and of nations, are often produced by causes which elude investigation.

The effect of error of every sort, in whatever manner it has been adopted, is to disqualify the mind in a certain degree for the pursuit of truth. It suggests the idea, that such a pursuit is unnecessary, as the object in view has already been gained. By the possession which it has obtained of the memory, it also deprives the mind of a portion of its voluntary power. Thus error, when once received, has a tendency to perpetuate its own existence, and operates as a weight to fix our nature in the dust, and to prevent its progress in intellectual improvement.

Errors thus received and fixed in the memory are denominated prejudices. To avoid or surmount such prejudices, or to acquire what is called a candid mind, is a moral duty of no small importance.

This world has hitherto exhibited such a scene of perplexity and confusion, that there is no end of the notions and fancies that have been entertained by mankind. The inhabitants of one side of the globe are not more opposite to those on the other in situation than in their ideas of what is true and rational. In Europe, as our minds are more active, so our opinions and manners are more mingled and incongruous than elsewhere: they partake of the ideas and practices of our ancestors in the whole variety of their history; and are such a strange mixture of Judaism, Popery, Protestantism, feudalism, chivalry, freedom, slavery, fanaticism, moderation, prejudice, scepticism, wisdom, and folly; that after a man has received a complete education, that is to say, after his memory has been filled with the whole of our notions, and his mind become habituated to the manners which are the result of them, he will find himself in a very perplexing situation, if he attempt seriously, and in earnest, to discover truth upon almost any particular subject: he will find his memory already occupied by a system of opinions which may be true or false; the difficulty of preventing these from embarrassing the judgment can only

be conceived by those who have made the trial. There is such a mixture of truth and error in our notions, that it becomes equally irrational altogether to disregard, or altogether to acquiesce in them; while, at the same time, we know not how to separate the true from the false. This has given rise to very opposite trains of thought. Some individuals having discovered a portion of the errors into which mankind have fallen upon religious and political subjects, rashly concluded from thence, that they could not depart too far from vulgar notions and prejudices; and thus, from supposing that all truth must consist of novelties, they have rendered their own efforts of little value by the extravagant fancies in which they have been ultimately led to indulge: Others, on the contrary, from a firm attachment to the opinions which found earliest access to their minds, perceiving that they contain much truth, and that great absurdities have been adopted by those who ventured to disregard them, endeavour, as it were, to shut their ears, or to refuse their attention to any challenge that can be brought against received opinions. If they enter upon the subject, it is only to attempt to discover arguments whereby to fortify themselves and others in the notions they have received. It was from such feelings that the infallibility of the Pope, and the divine indefeasible hereditary right of kings, found zealous and faithful supporters in a former age. To

judge fairly of opinions, it seems necessary to acquire a kind of spirit or character, which is usually more successful in discerning what is true, than in making proselytes to truth after it is discovered ; that is to say, it is necessary to acquire that degree of self-command which prevents the mind from being strongly impressed with preconceived opinions, from whatever source they may have come, and renders it neither liable to be powerfully attracted by the love of novelty, nor by ardour for applause ; all of which sentiments tend to interest their possessors too deeply in the systems they adopt. It unfortunately happens, however, that this philosophical tranquillity or candour of spirit is usually produced, not by wisdom but by indolence. Our passions are the chief causes of our exertions ; and hence men of active minds, by whom discoveries of all sorts are most likely to be made, are usually, at the same time, possessed of a restless and vehement character, which leads them to every extreme in action and in thought ; and to disgrace, by extravagant novelties, or by imprudent conduct, their successful speculative efforts.

In this point of view, there seems to be something defective in every mode of education which has yet been devised. From the practice of filling the memory of young persons with opinions which they are as yet unprepared to investigate, and which they cannot afterwards easily

relinquish, it unfortunately happens that persons of regular characters and sober manners are seldom the best qualified for the discovery or discernment of new truths ; and that men of defective education and irregular lives often make the greatest discoveries in the sciences and arts, and possess comparatively more acute discernment than persons of better intentions and character. The celebrated Paracelsus, whose notions made so great an impression in the medical world, is a noted instance of acuteness of mind as separated from private respectability ; and the misfortunes and vices of some distinguished English poets and men of letters, seem to establish the principle, that the minds which too easily receive education, or the habits approved by mankind, are apt, by the same passiveness of temper, to remain satisfied with whatever notions have been early impressed upon their memory, and avoid making valuable speculative efforts ; whereas the more turbulent and restless spirits, by the very errors into which they plunge, escape imbibing unexamined opinions ; and thus remain better qualified for the exercise of the understanding. Perhaps the more laborious religious education which the Roman Catholics receive, is the chief cause of their inferiority of invention to those educated in Protestant countries. That education would be the best which should inculcate the fewest unintelligible and unexamined opinions ; while,

at the same time, it should excite the mind to speculative curiosity, and produce habits of regularity and temperance in private life.

It is impossible to give rules in detail for discerning truth in every branch of science. The general moral principle, however, upon which we ought to proceed is this, that the capacity of discerning truth forms a large portion of the excellence of an intelligent nature; that it is of no importance to us whether the notions of our countrymen are true or false; but that it is of much importance that we should find out truth as it is, and act, or at least judge, according to it. The usual cause of error is not that we are unable, or want discernment to discover the truth; but that we have become attached to a train of opinions which we are unwilling or fear to dismiss. In such cases, it will almost uniformly be found that our opinions had been adopted, without examination, upon the authority of others. This infallibly gives rise to angry and uncandid disputation. A man who has long acted upon a favourite notion, finds his self-estimation alarmed when he discovers his own inability to justify it; whereas, had he begun by examining accurately its truth, the same reasons which originally justified his belief would probably do so still. At all events, as it was only on account of these reasons that he had suffered himself to be swayed, a discovery of

their defectiveness would readily lead to a change of sentiment.

It is not an uncommon practice both among political and religious sectaries, to avoid reading any book, or even listening to any conversation favourable to the wrong side of the question; that is to say, the side that opposes their own party. When books are read, it is for the purpose of what is called being 'improved by them, or to treasure up in the memory the sentiments contained in them, and to acquire the habit of thinking as the author thinks. This, when done under the notion that it improves the human mind, is abundantly absurd. It is acting as if we came into the world, not to improve our faculties by the discernment of truth, but to become sectaries of one kind or other. It ought to be remembered that no man can become wise merely by the wisdom of another. He who believes a principle only because he is told that it is true, cannot justly be said to know it, or to have become any wiser. If a man is told that the whole of a thing is always greater than any of its parts, he has no doubt been informed of what is very true; but if he implicitly believe this assertion as a matter of fact, and do not, by an act of his own, understanding, perceive its reality, and how and why every possible objection to it must necessarily be false—he is not advanced one step towards the perfection of an in-

telligent being. That perfection consists in every individual, not in having the memory stored with propositions, but in the capacity of discerning truth by the proper energy of his own mind.

It is indeed said, that weak minds may be misled by the indiscriminate perusal of whatever has been thought or written by ingenious men: But all minds are originally formed weak, that is, ignorant; and the object of their creation is, that they may one day become vigorous, which can never be accomplished without the full exercise of their faculties. Providence trains up the minds of men to penetration and vigour, not by placing them amidst enlightened beings, who might at once introduce them to much knowledge, but amidst their equals, that is to say, among erring beings, whose various opinions afford full employment to our faculties to discover truth amidst the obscurity in which they usually involve it. If we would improve successfully our intellectual powers, we must do for ourselves what Nature has already, in some degree, done for us. For the sake of going right, we must encounter the hazard of going wrong. We ought to attend to what others have thought as an intellectual exercise which Nature has provided for us, but at the same time to receive what is said in books, or by men, not as truths, but as thoughts concerning truth, which we are



not to believe, but to weigh and consider. Even if our own conclusions should often prove false, we shall still gain much; we shall, at least, acquire application, acuteness, and energy of mind, qualities which bring us near to the description of excellent beings; which will at the long run enable us to rectify every error, and carry us forward in that improving career which our nature is formed to run.

With regard to a large division of Moral Science, it ought to be remembered, that any truth which we can discover is not absolute but relative. We may discern, with absolute certainty, what ought to be the ultimate object of human pursuit; because the whole arrangements of Nature point out the improvement of our intellectual character as the purpose of our existence: but the means of improving that character must necessarily alter according to circumstances. Thus the kind of education which was the best that could be attained in ancient times, when books were few, and of difficult access, and when it was necessary to resort to public theatres to obtain an acquaintance with the laws, religion, and even the history of our country, would now be justly regarded as extremely defective, when the art of printing has lodged with every individual more extensive means of information. From his progressive nature man is continually altering. No.

system of institutions or arrangements, therefore, can be formed, which will remain at all times well adapted to his condition. In a scene which, by the successive improvement of every art, Nature intends to exist in a state of continual fluctuation, the chief source of error is that presumption by which, on the one hand, men imagine they have devised arrangements, which in all possible circumstances will remain for ever and unalterably suitable to the condition of human society; or by which, on the other hand, they attempt to foresee, and too hastily to aid the changes which Nature is gradually accomplishing in the world, before she has fully developed her own plan of operation. It is from this last circumstance that philosophers often fall into errors, which to ordinary minds seem to demonstrate wonderful weakness. Thus our ablest men repeatedly issued erroneous predictions about the highest amount to which what is called the funding system, or British national debt, was capable of being carried. This grand political experiment is proceeding, like all other events, under the management of Providence, for the instruction of future times: individuals, however, for some time after its commencement, without waiting the result, only exhibited instances of human rashness, by attempting to say where it was to terminate. When the experiment shall either have been

completed, or shall have drawn very near to a close, it will then only become a sure source of instruction, which will render it no difficult matter for men of sense to foretel the result of such experiments in after times. In whatever relates, therefore, to the condition of man in this world, there is no other means of attaining to the knowledge of absolute truth, than that of observing the variety of forms which the human mind is capable of assuming in every possible situation. The world has existed long enough to afford much information in this respect. If, we still exist at too early a period of its history to be able to complete the investigation of the human character, that circumstance, while it demonstrates that the field of Moral Science can never be fully occupied, ought at the same time to operate as a lesson of moderation, or a warning against the presumption of those who either imagine, that, by running before nature, they can state a complete system of truth upon this subject, or who would treat with severity any attempt to advance notions which the present generation may regard as bearing the aspect of novelty

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**CHAR. VI.****OF THE RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF THE  
DIFFERENT SCIENCES.**

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WITHOUT pursuing farther the consideration of the different ways in which the human understanding may be exerted in the investigation of truth, I shall make a few short remarks upon the degrees of attention due to different objects of speculation.

Human knowledge may be divided into three branches; Morals, Physics, and Mathematics.

The study of Morals, or of the part which men ought to act in this world, evidently holds the first place in point of importance. It is more important that a man should discern clearly the great end of his existence, and the means by which it is to be successfully pursued, than that he should become acquainted with any subordinate branch of knowledge; for all knowledge and every pursuit must necessarily be subordinate to this. Things are so contrived

in this world, that its business usually goes forward without much discernment, on the part of the actors, of the great purposes of Providence to which they are subservient ; but this discernment, when it can be attained, not only contributes to the worth and excellence of our nature, but also enables individuals to fulfil the particular duties allotted to them in life with more satisfaction, and consequently with greater energy.

The human race are so situated in this world, that the greater number of them must engage in severe labours ; and the rest are induced voluntarily to submit to much toil. But moments of reflection are apt to come upon all men. The poor man sometimes becomes dissatisfied with his condition ; the wise are apt to stand still, and to question the utility of all their cares ; and the unhappy have at times dropped their task, to consider why it ought not to be abandoned for ever ; men of science have said of books that they are unprofitable, and produce only weariness ; and men of business have suspected, that the bustle of life is an idle labour that brings no adequate reward. These are difficulties which moral science ought to explain. It accordingly teaches us, that our success in life depends, not upon the pleasures we enjoy or the situations we occupy, but upon the intelligence and vigour of character which we acquire ; that labour and

anxiety, as the chief sources of these qualities, ought to be numbered among the best blessings bestowed upon our nature; and that, in this point of view, even misery itself may at times be regarded as not ultimately calamitous. It is therefore the duty, not of one or two, but of all mankind, to attend to the principles of moral science. One man may be an astronomer, another a mechanic, and a third an husbandman; but each of them ought to understand the ultimate object of his labour, and the true or moral value to himself and to mankind of astronomy, of mechanics, or of agriculture. This knowledge gives a dignity to every occupation, and importance to every useful employment. It confers upon our efforts the proper attribute of intelligence and rationality, that of always pursuing an important end, and of doing nothing without a valuable purpose. By investigating the situation of man in this world, and by discerning the effects which it has a tendency to produce, the mechanic, the husbandman, and all who are active in the service of society, will find that it is only by their own ignorance that their employment becomes illiberal and mean; that they ought not to regard themselves merely as toiling for bread to support a joyless or obscure existence: they are actually contributing to create and to preserve in the universe an immense mass of intelli-

gence. To themselves they are necessarily acquiring a considerable portion of skill and of steadfastness of mind; and, by enlarging their conceptions, they may not only become excellent and enlightened beings, but by observing the dependence of the whole of society upon all its parts, they may have the satisfaction to perceive, that their own labours are important and necessary to enable mankind to run that career of progressive improvement which gives to our nature all its elevation and worth.

But although moral science, or an acquaintance with the great business of man in this world, is unquestionably the important object of human investigation to which other studies ought to be subservient, it does by no means follow, that this is always a more improving study than any other, or that it ought to be pursued to the exclusion of other branches of knowledge.

Physical science, or the knowledge of external nature, has also its value. It is obtained by observing accurately the objects and events that occur in the world, and by arranging them under simple and perspicuous heads, that they may be easily remembered and communicated. By exercising itself in this manner, the mind acquires that kind of self-command called *perseverance*; it learns to take delight in the enlargement of its knowledge, which removes it from the temptation to pursue less valuable

pleasures ; and its acuteness of discrimination is at the same time highly improved.

As natural objects are obvious to the senses, they form a better commencement of study to the unexperienced mind than intellectual qualities ; which being invisible in themselves, require much observation and reflection before they can be rightly understood. The study of physical science possesses also this advantage, that it can at all times be pursued ; and important discoveries may constantly be expected to be made in it by the industry of individuals. The objects of it, being the parts of the solid globe upon which we tread, are passively placed in our hands, and may be disposed of without injury or inconvenience in every possible way. Experiments, therefore, are at all times practicable in this department of study. The case is very different with regard to moral science. The experiments in it must be made by divine Providence ; and their results can only be waited for and examined. Neither can they be repeated at pleasure for the purpose of rectifying misapprehensions concerning them. When men do violently attempt to make ~~moral~~ experiments, by altering the established order of society, from the hope of producing greater good, they always incur a very serious responsibility. Their efforts do no doubt sometimes prove successful ; but when ill judg'd, either in the ge-



neral design, or in the circumstances in which they are undertaken, they are apt to be productive of the most dreadful calamities.

It so happens that the interests and the prejudices of men interfere less with the pursuit of physical than of moral truth. Neither kings nor priests, nor popular factions, think they have any interest in preventing a man from investigating accurately the difference between the flesh of an ox, and the grass upon which he feeds, from which that flesh is formed. Few persons have any opinion upon such a subject which they are not willing readily to relinquish in favour of truth. The utility derived from new inventions is also so obvious, that the whole world are disposed to give them encouragement. Hence it becomes easier to induce men to engage in this than in any other branch of study; because its advantages are most obvious, and because they are less likely to quarrel with mankind in consequence of the proficiency which they make in it.

From having fewer inveterate prejudices to combat in physical studies, it usually happens that they who engage with some vigour in this branch of science acquire a more candid and liberal spirit of enquiry than other men. Of the sceptical philosophers, or those who doubt every thing even to their own existence, few or none have advanced far in experimental science;

and the same remark applies to all intolerant and dogmatical religious, and even political sectaries. Such men are usually little acquainted with Nature, and little versant in the investigation of her productions. They have not accustomed themselves to examine what are doubtless the operations of the Author of the universe, and thereby to become acquainted with his ways and character. The difference betwixt the success and the failure of an experiment is so notorious, and impresses itself with such conviction upon the mind, that the authority of the greatest names becomes of no force in opposition to it; general scepticism is banished from a mind accustomed to the consideration of realities; and a moderation of character is produced towards the errors of others, from a knowledge of the difficulties attending the pursuit of truth, and of the irresistible evidence which attends the discovery of it.

The late discoveries in chemistry have rendered physical science a favourite pursuit; and it appears to me, that this circumstance will prevent the English language from suffering that corruption which occurred to the Greek and Roman tongues. During the last half of the late century, the English language was proceeding rapidly into a similar state of corruption. Swift, Addison, and other writers, had succeeded in rendering the language of their

country an easy and perspicuous vehicle of thought. At the same time, the most important sentiments of a political, moral, and religious nature had been expressed in it. Future writers, either to cover their own want of originality, or to amuse the public ear by novelty, found it necessary to indulge, upon every subject, in a measured, ornamented, and rhetorical style. Thus Gibbon, Johnson, and even Robertson, appear to have accounted the form of the sentences in which their thoughts were to be communicated of far higher importance than the thoughts themselves. Hence a sonorous and rhetorical verbosity was coming to be introduced into our language, in which the sentiments of the writer were often lost amidst the flowing music and imagery of his style. The taste for physical study seems happily to be now restoring the public taste to a love of perspicuity and simplicity. In perusing a detail of interesting experiments, or an explanation of a valuable discovery, we should feel ourselves teased and provoked by that pedantry which, instead of giving the requisite statements in the simplest and clearest manner, should attempt to excite admiration by metaphorical allusions, or the construction of splendid periods.

It is scarcely necessary to remark, that physical science is of great moral value, from the tendency which it has to contribute to the Sub-

sistence and the safety of mankind. It is by the modern improvements in agriculture and navigation, added to the invention of gunpowder, that the barbarous have ceased to be formidable to the civilized nations; and that the race of Europeans, or rather of Britons, promises to extend itself over the fairest portions of the habitable globe.

I mentioned Mathematics as a third branch of knowledge. Strictly speaking, perhaps it can scarcely be accounted a branch of science, or a department of the study of Nature; being rather an art which is subservient to the acquisition of physical science. It is the art of comparing dexterously, or, as it is called, of *measuring* the quantities of bodies. This art of comparing the magnitude, weight, and number of bodies, was brought to considerable perfection at a very early period; because mankind have daily occasion to exercise a certain degree of it, and because very little knowledge of Nature is necessary for the study of it. After the first steps, it is carried on by imagining new figures and quantities, and by contemplating their resemblance or difference, and the ways in which they may be compared. The object, therefore, which a mathematician studies is not truth, or things actually existing in Nature, but imaginary objects, contrived to resemble and to facilitate the comparison of those that really exist

From misunderstanding the object of mathematics, and the points about which they are conversant, it has become a sort of fashion to speak of mathematical certainty, mathematical accuracy, and mathematical precision; as if truth were ascertained with greater correctness in this than in any other branch of human inquiry—a supposition which is altogether erroneous. A mathematician imagines or *supposes* the existence of perfect circles, perfect globes, squares, cubes, and triangles; though Nature never produced any such objects. His whole facts are imaginary. When he reasons concerning a lever, he means a straight line, which is perfectly inflexible, and which is of no breadth or thickness. His ropes are straight lines, which are perfectly flexible. He argues about the properties of his imaginary figures, and the operations of his imaginary instruments; and he no doubt forms conclusions or inferences which are perfectly correct: for this reason, that he has got the premisses of his own making, and is not hampered by the consideration of the irregular figures which Nature has produced. When mathematicians, however, come to reduce their speculations to practice, their art is found to have no higher certainty than any other; for let a dozen of them in succession be turned into a field which is surrounded by irregular lines, and no two of them will give the

same precise report of its dimensions. Of this the courts of law have ample experience. I have known a piece of work measured by judicial authority six several times by as many artists, whose probity was not impeached, before the amount of the tradesman's account could be fixed. After all no certainty was obtained: But the judges, who were bound by their duty to bring the dispute to a close, adopted the last measurement; because it happened to correspond tolerably with the first, and no two others had such a resemblance. In like manner, when applied to mechanics, the rules of mathematics are equally defective. The ropes which human skill produces are found to be very different from the imaginary flexible lines of the mathematician. They are stiff and bulky; and the operation of the lever is, in like manner, in practice obstructed by friction; so that, without the aid of experience, nothing can be done. Were men of science in other departments to proceed like mathematicians, they also could form conclusions, which would be equally precise and certain. A moralist, for example, might imagine or *suppose* the existence of a man possessed of perfect wisdom and perfect self-command; he might suppose this wise man engaged in a most important pursuit, upon the result of which depended the welfare of thousands; he might next suppose that somebody

should be idle enough to offer to this perfect being a bribe of L.100 to desist from his purpose—it is evident, that no conclusion in all mathematics is more certain than that which the moralist might here make ; and that it would be as impossible to move his imaginary virtuous being by a bribe of L.100, as to bend an inflexible lever with the force of a pound weight. In short, where reasoners have the premises of their own making, it is their own fault if their conclusions are incorrect.

By speculating, however, about the properties of imaginary figures, such as globes, cylinders, and cubes, men become better qualified for comparing or measuring the less perfect figures which actually exist in Nature, or can be fashioned by human art. Thus the mathematics form a very valuable but subordinate and artificial branch of knowledge, from which great aid is derived in transacting business, and in arranging, comparing, and recollecting, the objects of Nature. The study of mathematics produces a considerable degree of command over the train of our ideas, as well as of acuteness of discrimination ; and so far is attended with direct moral advantage. In other respects, however, this study is to be regarded rather as a step towards acquiring a knowledge of physical science, and a capacity for doing business with facility, than as forming any part of the investigation of what actually exists in the universe.

## CHAP. VII.

## OF INTELLECTUAL FATIGUE AND AMUSEMENT

As it is impossible to do justice to the intellectual character of man, without occupying in its improvement as much as possible of the opportunity allotted by Providence for that purpose, that is, of our existence in this world, I shall here take some notice of the degree in which a suspension of the useful exertion of the intellectual powers seems necessary to the general welfare of the human constitution.

Those parts of our constitution which do not require the exertion of the will, never become weary or require rest: the heart beats, the blood and the aliment circulate, and the chest alternately expands and contracts to admit of breathing, without any necessity of rest; but the arms, the legs, the eyes, and all the organs of sense and of voluntary motion require periodical repose. A painful sensation, called *Weariness*, is, on such occasions produced; the proper re-



lief from which consists of the total suspension of every kind of voluntary exertion that is denominated *Sleep*.

In investigating long and minutely any particular subject, it becomes necessary, by an effort of will, or voluntary power, forcibly and steadily to arrest the train of ideas, and repeatedly to call up, or recollect and exhibit to the mind or perceptive faculty, the same ideas, that they may be correctly examined and compared. The efforts which thus become necessary to prevent the general train of ideas from proceeding in its ordinary revolution, and repeatedly to recal the same particular ideas, are at last productive of an uneasiness, which also receives the name of *Weariness*; because it possesses a considerable resemblance to that resulting from long continued voluntary motion or attention to objects of sense.

It is a question which I cannot resolve, What that is which constitutes *Weariness*? Whether it consists of a failure of the voluntary power of the mind, or of an injury offered by its continued action upon them to the limbs, to the organs of sense, and to the mysterious organ of memory, or train of ideas? It is certain that the same relief is provided by Nature for every kind of fatigue or weariness, and that it consists of a total abstinence from voluntary efforts, or of sleep.

It seems probable that the perceptive faculty requires no repose. At the same time this fact cannot be ascertained with absolute certainty, because no ideas or perceptions enter into the record of the memory, unless when an effort of will or attention is exerted. Accordingly, when the voluntary power is *entirely suspended*, that is, during very profound sleep, nothing is recorded in the memory, and consequently it cannot be known whether any perceptions then occurred.

•After long continued intellectual exertion in the examination of a particular subject (providing no extraordinary bodily efforts have recently been made), it is found, that although the voluntary power is in some measure exhausted with regard to that particular set of ideas, yet that, by altering the subject, and directing the attention to a new set of ideas, or a different train of thought, the sense of weariness in a great measure passes away, and additional exertions of reason can still be made without pain, and even with pleasure. Such changes in the objects of our attention may be repeatedly made, till a period of time shall have elapsed which will be sufficient to render necessary for the whole frame the refreshment of sleep, or a suspension of all voluntary efforts. Thus our constitution is so contrived, that, excepting during the hours requisite for sleep, the attention may be

always directed to some valuable purpose. After the most severe application to a particular subject, a sound understanding is always capable of turning itself with satisfaction to some other rational employment, to some kind of business, to the improvement of taste, to the conversation of intelligent persons, to the acquisition of some useful branch of knowledge, or to the contrivance or performance of some good action. Hence it does not appear that, to a person who is awake, either absolute idleness, or any occupation that is absolutely useless, is ever necessary.

The pleasure derived from activity is so great, and in the north of Europe, at least, the energy of the human character is such, that absolute idleness, or a suspension of voluntary exertion without sleep, speedily produces much uneasiness. Accordingly, to get quit of this state, and to enjoy a portion of the pleasure derived from activity, many persons, who are not under the necessity of earning a subsistence by constant employment, have devised what are called *amusements*, wherewith to occupy themselves. These amusements are generally at best absolutely useless and unimproving occupations. They are attempted to be justified as a relief from the fatigue which results from steady attention to any particular important object. In truth, however, they are in general nothing

more than a set of ingenious and pleasant contrivances to enable individuals to pass through life with as little benefit as possible either to themselves or others; or they are devices whereby men contrive to defeat the views of Nature, by occupying themselves, and exhausting their powers and time in a frivolous, instead of a rational manner.

The exertion of attention, or of a considerable effort of activity and skill, is as necessary to render amusements pleasing, as it is to the improvement of our intellectual powers. But if the human mind must be occupied, its employment ought surely to be rational rather than frivolous; the more especially as the one is not less consistent with pleasure than the other. Amusements, that is to say occupations intended for no valuable purpose, are seldom sought after, and are never found necessary by those who seriously wish to make progress in intellectual improvement, or even by those who are under the influence of any powerful or steady passion. Such men have no occasion for them, as their minds are already sufficiently occupied, and they feel nothing of the uneasiness that attends absolute idleness. Every amusement, therefore, or whatever has nothing further for its object than to prevent the necessity of thinking, and to render idleness agreeable, may justly be regarded as a contrivance hostile to

the end of our existence. It wastes in fruitless trifling the time allotted in this world for the amelioration of our nature; and it has not even the excuse of affording an adequate return of pleasure in exchange. The activity of amusement is no doubt pleasing; but the activity of business is more pleasing upon the whole, as it is more permanent and more vigorous. Hence it is well known that men of business are happier than men who have no employment, excepting that of seeking after amusement.

This general censure does not apply to that bodily exercise which the situation of some persons renders necessary to the enjoyment of health, and which is not a pastime, but a duty: It is only directed against those who struggle hard to waste their existence, by exerting all their wits in contriving how to get out of this world without performing any part of the business for which they were sent into it. And surely the human constitution must be well fitted for pressing onward to excellence, since a man often suffers almost as much labour, fatigue, and hardship, in getting quit of time by idleness and amusement, as he would do by filling up the moments of it with the efforts of a mind advancing progressively in wisdom. This is daily illustrated in the case of those who, by the arrangements of society, are born to the possession of the means of gratifying all their passions. Th

miserable exertions made by them to fill up their vacancy of mind, frequently costs them more care, more loss of health, of fortune, and of true enjoyment, than would have been necessary to have rendered them the most enlightened of mankind. Nature, however, has so managed matters that they usually do, in the midst of their anxiety for amusement, acquire a small degree of improvement arising from that very anxiety, although this improvement is often too small to be of much importance either to themselves or to the world.

Some amusements, or modes of trifling, are less mischievous than others; but the most pernicious form which they can assume, is that of occupying the mind with hazard or gaming. Though somewhat out of place, I cannot omit the opportunity of taking some notice of this last practice. It will afterwards appear that our passions are the result of habit and of weakness. They are overcome by being suppressed, and by acquiring the power of acting under the immediate influence and dictates of the understanding: but in the case of gaming, the uncertainty of the event produces a constant renewal of hopes and fears; and if it did not do so, it would be attended with no pleasure. The exercise of gaming, then, is equivalent to regularly training or educating ourselves to become passionate, instead of rational beings; and if we

game for money, we fix in our minds the passion of avarice in its strongest form. Accordingly, almost all persons who occupy themselves much in this manner, become less or more greedy, peevish, quarrelsome, or superstitious. They who subject their other passions to their avarice, that they may gain money by gaming as by a regular trade, besides misemploying their talents and their time, are guilty of taking advantage of the weakness of others to their injury, and of unjustly deriving subsistence from the general funds of society, while they contribute nothing to their increase. Without taking into account, therefore, the distress that is sometimes produced by this means, it is obvious that the practice of engaging in games of hazard, by the loss of time which it occasions, and by the interest which it excites in frivolous objects, is in all cases a vicious perversion of the human faculties and exertions. The excuse that is usually made for it is altogether absurd, that we know not how to employ ourselves otherwise in company. What business have a set of persons to come together who have nothing to say to one another? Or why should they remain together, after all they have to say is exhausted, and when they are no longer capable of entertaining each other with instructive conversation? If men and women will not be virtuous, let them at least be innocent.

In the mean time, as man, in the pursuit of excellence, has much to do, his understanding is capable of doing much; but the proper management of its powers consists, not so much in pushing obstinately forward, in any one branch of improvement, as in so varying the objects of our efforts, as to keep the mind always active and awakened. The understanding ought to relieve itself by turning from moral to natural science, and by ranging through the different branches of human knowledge. Let it not be said, that in this way only frivolous and superficial accomplishments can be acquired. The universe is the systematic work of one mind; and no one part of the system can be well understood by those who have not such a general knowledge of the whole as will enable them to discern the relations of the several parts which mutually explain and throw light upon each other. Besides this, man has more than knowledge to acquire. The energy of a skilful and steady mind must be the result of much exertion in the business of life. To this it ought therefore to be directed as well as to speculative wisdom. High discernment and vigour united constitute its excellence; and this excellence is to be attained, not by periodical fits of idleness and action, but by various, by well directed, and constant activity.



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## CHAP. VIII.

### OF THE APPETITES AND PASSIONS IN GENERAL.

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WHEN the mind has received pleasure or suffered pain from any object, the pleasure or the pain, like every other perception, is lodged in the memory, and returns at times as a part of the ordinary train of ideas. The remembrance of pleasure produces a desire of again enjoying the same pleasure ; and the remembrance of pain produces a desire to avoid a repetition of it. By being frequently renewed, these desires become deeply fixed in the memory, and obtain the name of *appetites* and *affections*. If at any time, from their intenseness, they engross the train of ideas so completely, as in a great measure to set at defiance the voluntary power of the mind, and to produce an approximation towards madness, they are denominated *passions*.

I have said that the human mind receives pleasure and pain from three sources : First, from the senses ; secondly, from the exertion of,

activity or voluntary power ; and, lastly, from the remembrance of all these pleasures.

From these different kinds of pleasure or uneasiness arise the appetites, affections, and passions. They are not originally implanted in our constitution ; but it is evidently the intention of Nature that they should grow up in the human character. The chief difficulty in considering them in a moral point of view, consists in distinguishing between the use which Nature makes of our appetites and affections, and the conduct which men as individuals ought to observe with regard to them. Nature excites and cherishes them ; but it is our duty, as rational beings, to subdue and restrain them. In this we may seem to contend against Nature ; but, in truth, we fulfil her purpose, which is that of at once exciting us to action by motives, and of teaching us skill and self-command by appreciating and subduing these motives.

## CHAP. IX.

## OF THE APPETITES.

ALTHOUGH an enlightened understanding can perceive that the improvement of our rational faculties is the best object of human pursuit ; yet it is certain that this improvement is by no means the motive of our most frequent exertions. Action in man is not originally the result of improved reason, but is produced by the two great stimulants pain and pleasure. To avoid the one, and to obtain the other of these, is apt to form, in ordinary minds, the great business of life. Our senses are the earliest source of our pains and pleasures. The remembrance of these pleasures gives rise to the desire of their repetition, which is called *appetite* or *animal appetites*, from their being common to man and the inferior animals.

Appetites, or the wish for renewed sensual pleasure, arise so speedily and so universally from the pleasures of sense, that for a man to feel the power of any animal appetite, such as

hunger, thirst, lust, or weariness, is considered as neither right nor wrong in itself, but purely indifferent, because involuntary. It is certain, however, that they **may** be greatly strengthened as motives of action by our voluntary exertions. From reflecting frequently upon the pleasure derived from the gratification of any one of them, it may be enabled in a great degree to take possession of the memory, to the exclusion of more important objects; and the pursuit of it may become a considerable part of the occupation of life.

In their ordinary state, and when not used as a source of occupation, or, as it is called, of luxury, the appetites are a valuable and necessary part of our constitution. A man who should not possess them would be accounted a defective being; and the Author of our nature could not justly have regarded His own work as good and perfect, had it wanted them. The intellectual improvement, which forms the perfection of our nature, is not to be attained without the exertion of much thought and industry. In contriving our constitution, therefore, the most important object of attention must have been to find out business in which to engage us continually, that our talents might be called into constant action, and that it might never be in our power to sink into total indolence. Accordingly, the important trust is committed to us of preserving

our own individual existence, and of preserving the existence of our species. Food and rest are necessary for the one, and the union of the sexes for the other. But as we come into life altogether destitute of knowledge, both we and our species must have speedily perished, had not the salutary admonitions of sense stood to us instead of a speculative acquaintance with our constitution and its wants. We are not left to judge whether it is or is not wise in us to preserve our own lives, or to perpetuate our race. Sensations of pain and pleasure interfere and decide the question, without waiting for the slow exertions of reason. These sensations are a proof that our Creator regarded us as too thoughtless to be entrusted with the important task of preserving ourselves, and of maintaining in the universe a succession of intelligent beings, without adding to the aid of our reason the troublesome admonitions of animal appetites to remind us of our duty. Accordingly these appetites usually produce their intended effect. The human race are yet in their infancy ; and extensive conceptions of what is right and excellent are still so rare, that they seldom enter into view in the ordinary transactions of life. Many a husbandman prepares the ground and sows the seed, merely through fear of suffering the evils of famine, without reflecting upon the duty of promoting the improvement of his own

or of other minds, which alone can render the continuance of his labours of any value. Children also are begotten by parents who never once perceive the importance of the service they are performing to the universe, by contributing to the perpetual renovation of rational beings upon this globe. Thus the Author of Nature carries on His work by resources which His own skill has contrived, with little aid from the human understanding. And thus men are often blind instruments in His hands, accomplishing His pleasure, when they think they are only pursuing their own.

In the common opinion of mankind, it is always supposed that there is not merely an impropriety, but also something extremely contemptible, in a character that is much devoted to sensual pleasure. This may at first sight seem unreasonable. These pleasures arise so obviously and immediately out of our constitution, that Nature herself would seem to have in a special manner sanctioned the indulgence of them. Nor does it in speculation readily occur why one sort of pleasure should be accounted more respectable than another. Accordingly it appears to have been the opinion of the ancient sect of the Epicureans, that all pleasures were equally valuable ; a notion which never failed, among the respectable part of every community, to bring discredit upon their doctrines.

There is no doubt that the general opinion of mankind has decided this point in a rational manner ; and that however much in speculation men may sometimes be misled by ingenious notions, or forget in their conduct the improvement of their rational nature ; yet they are seldom so far lost to common sense as to treat this last object with contempt, or completely to overlook its value. The reason why the gratification of animal appetites is considered as dishonourable is this : In other pursuits, such as ambition or revenge, the exertion of a considerable, and sometimes of a very high, degree of ingenuity and strength of mind are requisite to their success ; and hence there is always something respectable in these passions : But in the gratification of our animal appetites, all thought and skill are unnecessary ; reason is completely banished ; and the perfection of that species of enjoyment is not inconsistent with the utmost stupidity and folly. The same principles in our nature, therefore, which induce mankind to set a high value upon intellectual worth, and upon all those objects and pursuits which afford an opportunity of displaying the presence and the exertion of distinguished wisdom and fortitude, lead them to regard the pursuit of sensual pleasure with contempt. Accordingly there is certainly no pursuit which the world is more ready to despise. Even in the most lux-

erious age, a confession of much attachment to these pleasures is avoided. In every form, and even when exerted for the most laudable purposes, they remind us, that part of our nature is irrational, and allied to the inferior animals; and the publication of their indulgence is therefore offensive.

The regulation, or due restraint of the animal appetites, has been denominated *Temperance*. Its chief object is the preservation of health, which is liable to injury by their irregular indulgence. Temperance is undoubtedly one of the most important of all the virtues; because, without the possession of a certain degree of bodily vigour and ease, little intellectual exertion and little improvement can be made. One branch of it, which receives the appellation of *Chastity*, will afterwards be noticed among the duties of which society is the object.

The true practical light in which the appetites ought in general to be regarded, is that of an index to explain the state and the wants of our constitution. Thus to unexperienced men, it might not be clear how frequently we ought to receive food, and in what quantities: but the appetite of hunger, if it is not misled by luxury, will always give sufficiently accurate information upon this subject. It is scarcely possible that any degree of physical knowledge, on our part, should ever entirely supersede this use of



our appetites. After the maturest consideration of a man's size, constitution, and exercise, a wise physician would scarcely pretend to prescribe with accuracy how much food and no more he ought to consume while in health; but the man's own appetite will determine this difficult point, even to an ounce, with the utmost truth and precision.

The pleasures which arise from the indulgence of the appetites diminish, like all other pleasures, by repeated enjoyment. It is therefore evident that they ought not to be accounted ultimate objects of rational pursuit. The chief error, however, that is usually committed concerning them, consists in regarding our appetites, not as a contrivance, for rousing our activity, and reminding us of our duty, but as a source of pleasure and an object of indulgence. By repeatedly directing the attention towards them, they are, in some minds, enabled to take such complete possession of the memory or train of ideas, that little else besides their gratification is suffered to be exhibited to the mind. Thus, instead of having its activity called forth by appetites, they are employed to divest it of all its energy, and to attach it to unworthy occupations and cares, in preference to intellectual improvement. Accordingly, when the love of sensual gratifications appears in any man to be fully fixed into habit, a very sure prognostic

tion may usually be formed that he will never be good for much. He may live and die inoffensively, but little energy will appear in his character; and his conduct will exhibit no effort to attain to an intellectual superiority of which he never conceived an idea. The vice of sensuality is apt to commit ravages even upon very valuable minds. It is a general rule, that persons of sedentary habits are most liable to fall into that form of it which consists of an attachment to the pleasures of the table, and which is perhaps the most dangerous. In this view, men of letters are exposed to considerable hazard. In the present age, in consequence of the riches that have flowed from so many quarters into our country, and in consequence of the growing fondness for a city residence, the evil is understood to prevail to a dangerous extent. It is even said, that by far the greater part of what are called *nervous distempers*, which are now so extremely prevalent among persons in easy circumstances, are the result of indolence, added to habitual indulgence in the pleasures last mentioned. It is also said to be in some measure owing to this vice, that a smaller proportion than formerly of the English dignified clergy, and others holding conspicuous stations in the universities or elsewhere, now possess a distinguished literary reputation. Indeed, the evils produced by sensuality are beyond the reach of

calculation, and have been complained of in every age. Many a gallant people, after having run a splendid career of arts and glory, have seen their honours all blasted by the selfish and stupid indolence produced by luxurious habits, which withdraw the mind from public and generous cares, and subdue its whole activity. The approaches of this vice, therefore, ought to be carefully resisted, by avoiding the kind of society in which it is most indulged, and by engaging the mind in active and valuable pursuits either of speculation or of business. Even the pursuits of vanity, ambition, avarice, or almost any other passion, are to be preferred to habitual indulgence in sensual, or in what are called *convivial pleasures*, which, if they do not prove injurious to health, at least render all activity painful, and never fail, ultimately, to sink the character into utter insignificance.

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**CHAP. X.****OF THE BENEVOLENT AFFECTIONS.**

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**W**HEN the mind has frequently derived pleasure from any object, or from the society of any person, such objects and persons come gradually to be remembered or associated in the memory along with the pleasures they have excited, and are therefore regarded with satisfaction. This satisfaction is called a *benevolent affection*, because it usually produces in the mind a desire of communicating its own happiness.

It has generally been supposed that the benevolent affections are originally implanted in our constitution, like the senses of sight or of hearing; but this is an error. They do indeed grow up in our nature in consequence of our situation and original character, but they are the result of our exertions and enjoyments.

The human mind has a great tendency to attach itself to the various objects by which it is surrounded, and to contract a fondness for them. The house in which we have long lived, the

woods and the mountains among which we have been accustomed to wander, a great stone upon which we have sat, or the stream to whose murmurs we have listened, frequently become the objects of a very pleasing regard. Our affection for these inanimate parts of Nature may be resolved into the pleasure which results from activity, and the memory of that pleasure. Our fondness for any object increases in proportion to the degree in which it has excited our attention, or cost us labour, or even anxiety. The rude rock upon which we have only gazed, does not interest our affections like the plant that we placed in the ground, and which has flourished under our care. The dog and the horse are also the most beloved of animals, because they occupy our attention in the highest degree.

But it is in the bosom of our own species that we first learn to think, to act, and to feel. During the period of a long infancy, our whole attention is occupied by the cares that are continually exerted towards us; and all our efforts at that early period are directed towards our protectors. Hence, even at that tender age (in which however the pleasures of exertion are felt as strongly as at any future period), we learn to love the human race, because their society is the means of calling forth whatever activity we possess, and is consequently the source of our chief pleasures.

We are not only born in society, but we continue in it, and it never ceases to afford the best opportunities of exerting all the energies of our nature. In the course of a long life, during our own education, amidst the schemes, the efforts, or the business of manhood, or in giving life and education to others, we are continually occupied by our own species. Our exertions are made in the midst of them. They call forth our emulation, our courage, and all that activity of character which is the source of our felicity. The human race, therefore, in consequence of our associating the idea of their presence with all our ideas and recollections of pleasure, gradually become the objects of our highest attachment and regard: and they become dear to us in proportion to the degree in which they have called forth our attention or our care; for even care and uneasiness, from the activity they excite, are more grateful to the human mind than indolence and vacancy of thought. Hence the mother, who has suffered in the production of an infant, and who has looked forward to its birth with anxious apprehension, loves it more than the father who has suffered nothing, and who, at that early period, often loves it not at all, unless perhaps in consequence of his attachment to the mother, or his own self-love, which may lead him to regard it as a kind of continuation or part of himself, and as the support of

his name and memory. Thus, also, parents, usually love a sickly child, that costs them much trouble, more than a healthy child, that has been less dependent on them. The Emperor Marcus Antoninus observes, that there is somehow less natural affection among persons of high rank than among other men. Upon the principles now stated it ought to be so. The common people, who labour hard to support their families, ought to love their children more than the rich, who find no trouble in supporting them, and who delegate to others the care of their education. A nurse has often more affection for an infant than its own mother, who does not nurse it. Thus men are careless of natural children; and thus their affection to their children increases with the childrens years, and with the exertions they make for them.

We love those of our own family, because they are the companions of our youth, and have the same interests with ourselves. Our friends are usually those with whom we have long associated, and in whose society we have exerted whatever talents we possess. Patriotism, or the love of our country, is an extension of these affections, and naturally arises from an attachment to our family, friends, and kindred: yet it scarcely exists in those countries where private citizens are never called upon to take some trouble for the welfare of their country;

that is to say, where freedom, or something resembling it, does not exist. Men who are permitted to interfere in public affairs, who find in them a splendid field for the exertion of ability, vigour, eloquence, and every faculty and every accomplishment they possess, soon become attached to that society in whose service they have encountered a thousand hazards, and in the management of whose affairs they have tasted the pleasures which arise from boundless energy of thought and of action. Hence arose that vehement patriotism, which, in the turbulent and popular governments of Greece and Rome, swallowed up every other passion and sentiment of the human mind, subdued every limited attachment to a family or friends, and induced the most accomplished men to court a life of perpetual strife and danger. Hence also, under despotic governments, the human mind languishes, and becomes careless of that society with whose affairs it has no concern; or if any degree of patriotism remain, it is only among those employed in military service, who are usually the freest part of such a state, and the only part of it that interferes in public affairs.

The benevolent affections, then, are produced by our situation; they are not implanted in our nature, neither do they form an original part of our constitution. The conjugal affection is indeed founded upon an animal appetite inherent



in our nature ; but it is improved, and derives its strength, from the common interest of the parties, and the reciprocal cares and services which their situation engages them to undertake. This affection is the foundation of every other. It prepares the mind for the parental and patriotic affections. Children, friends, and our country, are all, in consequence of it, more readily beloved ; but still they are beloved in proportion to the price and the trouble they have cost us. Our chief exertions, and consequently our chief pleasures, are always in the midst of the human race, which at last renders even the voice and the countenance of man pleasing objects. They are pleasing, because they bring the habitual recollection of activity and joy.

Benevolence is a very pleasing and a very popular sentiment. It has therefore been ascribed to the Deity as one of His attributes, and sometimes recommended to man as the highest excellence of his nature. It has already been shewn, that we have no evidence of the truth of the first of these ideas, as there is no reason to believe that this world was formed for the purpose of conferring happiness (immediate happiness at least) upon its inhabitants. It is also an error to suppose that the benevolent, or any other affections, ought to be regarded as a rule of action, or as a constituent part, or necessary

requisite, of the perfection of an intelligent being.

Every affection implies a certain degree of imperfection of character. When we say that an affection has taken root in the mind, we mean, that the casual associations of memory have become, to a certain degree, too powerful for the will; that self-command is partially lost; and that our actions are guided, not by the present perceptions or dictates of the understanding, or perceptive faculty, but by remembrances which we cannot banish. So far, therefore, we are in the state of inferior animals, having lost the power of voluntarily directing the train of our ideas or memory.

The benevolent affections, like all others, are blind in their own nature, and lead us to love, without regard to their imperfections, those with whom we have chanced to associate. Nay, they even lead us to love stocks and stones, and fields and woods, if they have only been the scene of our early amusements, or if we have resided long in the midst of them. They imply a preference of one person to another, not founded upon any distinction of excellence, but merely upon the accidental circumstance of our habits of familiarity with him. A mere blind, involuntary, and irrational feeling, however, not only cannot form a part of the excellence of a rational being, but it may even be regarded as

an imperfection : For to prefer the foolish because they were our companions, or begotten by us, to the wise, because they are strangers ; or to prefer an individual child to our whole family, our family to our country, our country to mankind, or to reason and truth, is unquestionably absurd and irrational.

In this manner, however, our affections certainly do proceed. They often tend to mislead us, and they can never be entirely trusted ; for they frequently place us in a dilemma, between the happiness of those we love, and the interests of justice and reason. Whereas the other constituent parts of perfection, wisdom and strength of mind, are always, at all times, and in all circumstances, right and fit to be obeyed ; neither can we ever do amiss by acting wisely and vigorously. To love is indeed pleasing ; but to eat is also pleasing. Both hunger and affection are involuntary feelings ; the one arising from our constitution, and the other from our situation and habits. They are both useful to our nature, but they are both of them blind. They sometimes lead us right, and sometimes wrong ; and are therefore to be restrained. But it is inconceivable that an ingredient of absolute perfection can in any instance be pernicious or evil. Wisdom is always excellent and right. The exertion of wisdom or fortitude is always excellent and right ; but hunger or affection

may direct us to eat poison, or to love the unworthy, which is obviously wrong.

It is in vain, then, that benevolence and sympathy have been represented by some authors \* as the fundamental principles of morals, or as the great rules which ought to direct the actions of men. The same reasoning which proves that these form no constituent or fundamental part of intellectual excellence, also shews that they cannot justly be regarded as a rule of conduct. They are both apt to mislead, and would at times induce us to love the worthless, and to sympathise with the guilty. They must, therefore, be directed by the rules of right reason. But if they require rules for their own direction, they can never be a proper rule of conduct for man.

It is not benevolence or sympathy, therefore, but that which regulates benevolence and sympathy, that ought to be regarded as the supreme director of human conduct, and as the ultimate object of human pursuit. Were we to adopt these affections as a rule of action, the blind would indeed be leading the blind. It is to the free dictates of the perceptive faculty, or of the understanding, when possessed of full voluntary power or self-command, that we ought to give obedience ; and it is to the attainment of a clear and accurate discernment of truth, and the pos-

session of complete self-command, that we ought, to aspire.

Are we to say, then, that when, without examining strictly into the intellectual excellence possessed by the objects of their affection, a wife loves her husband, a parent his child, a man his friend, or a citizen his country, that the sentiment they feel is not virtuous, is no part of their duty, and forms no part of the perfection of their nature? This question is easily answered by another. Is a man to be regarded as entertaining a very virtuous sentiment, when, without strictly considering his own character, he is deeply enamoured of himself, and prefers what he thinks his own interests to the welfare of all the world besides? Surely not. When a man loves himself in spite of unworthiness, it is only a proof that he is very far lost. A wise man would detest himself if he had acted a weak or a treacherous part; and this self-abhorrence would be a proof, that the discernment of truth, and the love of excellence, yet remained entire in his nature. A wife who loves, and is blind to the faults of a brutal, perverse, and stupid husband, is no doubt fortunate on account of the escape she makes from much disgust and mortification: but she is in great hazard of sinking into a resemblance of her unworthy associate. The same may be said of those who blindly love their children, friends, and country. They

may be all good-natured people : but so far as they love what is not lovely or excellent, their minds are blind, undiscerning, and weak ; they are wandering widely from reason, and are losing the perception of what is amiable and perfect.

The blind sentiment, then, of benevolence, or affection to our species, or to any individual of it, is favourably interpreted when said to be neither virtuous nor vicious ; although it is sometimes productive of good, and sometimes of bad consequences. If it be objected to this reasoning, that benevolence, guided by wisdom, and directed only towards the worthy and the excellent, is a branch of the virtue and perfection of our nature, the answer will be obvious. That, in such a case, it is the wisdom and not the affection that is valuable. The affection is a feeling or habit of the memory, which may go right or wrong at random ; the wisdom has all the discernment, and consequently all the merit. But there is a fallacy in this mode of considering the question. To be pleased with the excellent, and with excellence, is not what is understood by a benevolent affection. It is the nature of the benevolent affections to be undistinguishing, to blind the understanding, and to lead us, by way of excusing them, to persuade ourselves that our children are the most beautiful and wise children, our friends the best men, and our coun-

trymen the best and the bravest people on the face of the earth. The approbation or admiration of perfection and worth is of a very different nature. So far from being a blind affection or habit, I have already shewn that it is an exertion of the understanding in discerning the quantity of mind or intellect that exists in a particular person, or is displayed in his actions. It is not confined to those with whom we have associated, but extends to the virtuous and the excellent of all ages, and in all countries.

Still, however, it is by no means easy to appreciate accurately the value of the benevolent affections; for although they form no part of the perfection of our nature, yet they are closely connected with that perfection, and they are the means by which a very considerable portion of it is produced. As they arise from the pleasure which is the result of activity, they may justly be regarded, to a certain extent, as a test of the degree in which any mind has exerted itself, and has attained to excellence. Accordingly, these affections burn with highest energy in active and vigorous minds. In proportion to the vehemence with which men deliberate, decide, contend, and act, their felicity is increased, and their affections become ardent. Hence it usually happens, that the most generous and affectionate minds are at the same time the most active, earnest, and valuable.

In many cases, our benevolent affections lead us to act in the same manner that wisdom itself would have directed, had it been consulted. Whatever is injurious to the perfection of our nature, is also hurtful to them. Gluttony, drunkenness, indolence, and all sensual pleasures, while they divest the mind of its energy, at the same time attach it to unworthy enjoyments, and render it unthinking, selfish, cold, feeble, and confined, in all its conceptions and purposes. While ambition and avarice divert our attention from the pursuits pointed out by true wisdom, they also render us cruel, or at least careless of the welfare of mankind. In short, if any man is destitute of the benevolent affections, it is a proof that he is little better than a clod of earth, or that he is little less than a god. In the former case, his nature is languid, for its powers have never been called forth. If he had entered into the society of his equals, if he had exerted his best faculties, and contended in the race of fortune or of honour, the delight arising from activity would have attached him to those beings among whom it was received. In the latter case, he must be destitute of benevolence; not because he never knew it, but because he has risen superior to it, and has exchanged it for the approbation of virtue, or the love of the wise and the excellent, wherever they are found.



The benevolent affections are a kind of rewards of virtue, or incitements to the practice of it. They are acquired by exertion in society, in which alone our best faculties can be properly called forth. They are the flowers and the pleasing fruit, which at times may be gathered in the journey of life. Without them, beings of a feeble and imperfect character might have regarded that journey with despair, as passing through a desolate wilderness, filled only with thorns and brambles, and affording no recompense for their labour. As these affections arise from exertion, so, in their turn, they produce much energy of character. Attachment to friends, to a family, or to their country, induce men to engage in much care and labour, and to contrive a thousand schemes in which they would otherwise have had no concern. Thus we acquire skill and vigour, and consequently a certain portion of excellence; and thus a man, who imagines he is only serving his friend, or providing for his family, is in truth, without thinking of it, gradually improving his own character in art and energy, and becoming a more perfect being.

It is true, that beings of a more excellent original constitution, possessing a greater aptitude for improvement; might not require such inducements to lead them to the possession of the small degree of perfection that can be acquired in

this oblique manner. The admiration of excellence might alone be sufficient to conduct them to the direct pursuit of intellectual improvement, and to induce them to attempt to diffuse it through the universe, that they might be surrounded by what is perfect and excellent. But such is the ignorance and the feebleness in which man commences his existence, and so little notion has he of the value of wisdom or strength of mind, that Providence has found it necessary to use a great variety of indirect means to rouse his latent energies, and put him into the way towards perfection. We are formed with feeble and perishing bodies, that their preservation may afford us something to contrive and to do; yet these bodies we would not have sense, nor take the trouble, to preserve, were we not compelled and allured to do so by bodily pain and pleasure. We are placed amidst society, that, by studying knowledge in different branches, and by communicating our thoughts or discoveries, our progress may be hastened and facilitated: yet to that society we would pay no attention, were not the one half of the species made objects of sensual pleasure to the other; and were we not so formed, that one generation, as it were, creates the succeeding one, and supports it during a considerable period of its existence.

Were the existence of man to endure long e-

nough, it seems evident, that in wise men the benevolent affections, considered as mere habits, would pass away, and cease to make a part of their characters. The pleasure arising from activity, which was the original source of benevolence, would always indeed remain ; but the affections are merely the result of an association of ideas, rendering us fond of those persons who recal the memory of past pleasures enjoyed in their society. In the progress towards perfection, this association, like every casual and arbitrary connection of ideas, would lose its effect ; and we should learn to think and to act according to the steady dictates of truth and reason, approving, and being pleased only with what is excellent.

In the meantime, the duty of man, with regard to the benevolent affections, is nearly similar to his duty with regard to the animal appetites. Like them, our affections afford an index to the business in which Providence wishes us to engage. As the appetite of hunger indicates that we ought to labour to provide food for its gratification, so the affections shew that we are not designed to labour for ourselves alone. These truths and duties might have been discovered by wiser beings without the aid of such monitors ; at least, now that they are discovered, we know that it would have been right to preserve our own existence, and to labour for the benefit of

ourselves and others, even though no appetites or affections had ever led us, as it were, instinctively to do so.

Our affections are so contrived by Nature that they produce a preponderance of good ; but as they are blind and indiscriminating, they produce much evil also if left to themselves. They lead to much exertion in behalf of our families, friends, and country; but they also give rise to unjust partialities and preferences, which prove the source of hostilities and crimes. If they bind men in close ties of amity, they also bind them to support each other's passions, prejudices, and imaginary interests. Thus men come to be divided into parties; and wars and desolation arise out of the benevolent affections. The attachment to a family anciently engaged every man in *deadly feud* against some other family. The spirit of corporation and of faction originates in mens fondness for forming particular attachments and friendships. It was the benevolent affections, under the form of patriotism, that led Rome to desolate the world ; and thus the most extensive calamities are produced by these affections, if they are suffered to regulate our conduct, and are not placed under the controul of reason.

They who imagine that benevolence is the perfection of our nature, have given rules for cultivating it in the human character. These

rules are, for two reasons, altogether superfluous : first, because a blind affection or tendency can never constitute the perfection of an intelligent being ; and, secondly, because our affections grow up spontaneously, and require no culture. If men are only in the midst of society, and active in it, there is little doubt that they will become attached to some part of its members at least ; but this is not the business of man. To contract irrational partialities is no part of the perfection of his character. His employment ought to be, to judge with clearness of what is excellent and right, and to become what he approves. Thus he will ultimately love only the wise and the amiable ; and thus will he himself be regarded with approbation by every intelligent being.

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## CHAP. XI.

### OF THE MALEVOLENT AFFECTIONS AND PASSIONS

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As the benevolent affections are produced by the pleasures we enjoy in society, so the malevolent affections derive their existence from the

various forms in which we receive uneasiness from each other. In consequence of our situation and character, these are very various. Hence, if a man have a friend, he usually has an enemy also. But as every kind of action or exertion, even though attended with much pain, is productive of a certain degree of pleasure, we derive, upon the whole, a greater portion of pleasure than of uneasiness from the society of our own species; and accordingly our attachment to it always predominates over our dislike. The objects of hatred are particular, whereas the objects of good-will are general. We often hate an individual, or an assemblage of individuals, who have given us great and frequent uneasiness, which has gradually been treasured up in the memory till it has become a source of habitual discontent. But no man hates the human race; or at least, if such cases do exist, they are extremely rare, and must be the result of great want of fortitude, rendering the mind a slave to particular painful recollections, notwithstanding the general happiness it has derived from exertion in human society.

Affections and passions are often confounded with each other in language, for this reason, that they differ only in degree. An affection, as already noticed, is a more calm and steady tendency of mind; whereas a passion is an affection roused to violence, and having in it something of vehemence

or agitation, and consequently admitting of less self-command. The benevolent as well as the malevolent affections, when they meet with obstructions and difficulties to fix them deeply in the train of ideas, are apt to return so frequently to the thoughts, that the importance of their objects becomes magnified immoderately to the mind's eye; and in that case they assume the violent character of passions.

The malevolent affections have a variety of names; but they are all, while they last, productive of hatred, and are forms of that sentiment. The chief of them are anger, envy, jealousy, and revenge.

Anger is a sudden loss of self-command or discomposure of the mind, and dislike of an individual in consequence of his having been the cause of some unexpected disagreeable event. In proportion as the event has been longer expected, and the painful apprehension of it has been suffered to enter into the train of ideas, the sentiment approaches more nearly to the nature of perfect hatred, anger being only incipient hatred. It has always something sudden and obviously irrational in it, in consequence of the total want of self-command with which it is attended. In children, or persons of a very weak character, it is sometimes directed against inanimate objects.

Revenge is continued anger, or the violent desire of doing mischief to a person, because he

has occasioned to us painful sentiments which powerfully occupy the memory.

Envy is the hatred of an individual, because he possesses some real or supposed good which we cannot obtain, but, the value of which we have, by frequent reflection, fixed very strongly in the train of our ideas; so that it involuntarily, as it were, haunts the mind or perceptive power.

Jealousy is envy by anticipation\*. It is the hatred of one person, from the painful apprehension that he will obtain a preference over us in the favour of another.

Most of the other malevolent affections and passions receive the general name of hatred; they are all produced by suffering the recollection of past, the feeling of present, or the apprehension of future evil, or supposed evil, strongly to fix themselves in the train of ideas, so as to divest for the time the mind of a portion of its self-command, and to engross it with the desire of doing mischief. They have this in common, that as the benevolent affections are of a pleasing and happy nature, and excite a wish to produce a similar happiness in their objects; so the malevolent affections are all painful, and are accompanied with a more or less vehement desire to destroy, or at least to produce misery in their objects.

The malevolent passions of anger and revenge often avow themselves and their purposes to the



world; because a man under their influence frequently persuades himself that he is acting in a reasonable manner, and is only moved by a just disapprobation of improper treatment offered to himself, or to those in whose welfare his benevolent affections lead him to take a lively interest. On the contrary, the passions of envy and jealousy conceal themselves from the world, because they imply a sense of inferiority in the person who entertains them.

The malevolent passions, and more especially those of anger and revenge, are important instruments in the hands of divine Providence towards conducting the economy of human affairs. They render individuals extremely formidable to each other. A man under their influence becomes a very terrible and dangerous being. When animated by their impulse, his blood flows more vehemently, and his bodily strength is augmented, and becomes less easily exhausted. These passions are at times capable of totally withdrawing the mind from every other object of pursuit; and when the individual influenced by them possesses sufficient self-command to enable him to suppress the external appearances which they usually exhibit, it is in his power, by sacrificing his own safety, to destroy the existence of almost any one human being, however powerfully protected he may be. Accordingly, history affords repeated examples of cases, in

which mighty princes, in the midst of irresistible armies, have fallen a sacrifice to the vengeance of an obscure individual. Hence it happens that, in the infancy of society, the dread of exciting these terrible passions gives rise to the first rudiments of civilization and of equitable conduct. Savages, who are accustomed to give way to the full indulgence of these passions, and who know well their dangerous consequences, are taught, for the sake of avoiding the hazard of unnecessarily exciting them, to treat each other with a degree of ceremonious and formal respect unknown among civilized nations, where the dominion of law is acknowledged, and men are accustomed to submit their passions to its controul. These passions are even at all times productive of advantage, from the protection which they afford to the personal respectability of individuals, and from their consequent tendency to polish the manners of men. Our ancestors made use of them with this view, and allowed every individual to avenge an injury offered to his personal respectability, providing he did so openly, and with as much hazard to his own life as to that of his antagonist; thereby to demonstrate his own fortitude, and the value in which he held the public estimation. It was no doubt a barbarous, though it proved a very effectual resource for

polishing the manners of the higher orders of society in Europe.

But although, by the arrangements which Nature has adopted, these passions are made subservient to the production of good, it becomes a different question, how far they do not degrade the character of the individual who indulges in them, and how far it is a moral duty to resist their power over the mind?

As anger is always accompanied with agitation and confusion of mind, and consequently with imbecility or want of proper self-command, it is evidently inconsistent with that steadfast exercise of reason which is necessary to the correct use of the human faculties. It ought, therefore, to be avoided and suppressed. A man under its influence has not the power of directing his attention freely and deliberately to different objects and considerations; he is, therefore, incapable of discriminating correctly truth from falsehood, or what is equitable and rational from what is absurd. It is true, the world is disposed to excuse the absurdities of angry, or of what are called passionate men. This indulgence is not altogether improper; for anger is usually short lived, and the shortest follies are undoubtedly the best. But it ought to be remembered, that they still are follies, and that they who are subject to this passion, are liable to an intellectual disease which, while it lasts,

renders them weak and irrational, and reduces their character to the rank of that of the inferior animals, being equally destitute of the power of recollection and sound judgment.

The passion of revenge is still more to be avoided by a man who would act rationally than the passion of anger. It is nevertheless apt to be indulged in by persons who possess too much self-command, to allow themselves to be frequently hurried away by anger upon trifling or ordinary occasions. The reason is this; such persons not permitting themselves to be offended, unless upon occasions which greatly interest them, are apt, on that account, to abandon themselves much more completely to resentment, and to persuade themselves that they only require what is rational and just in demanding, that he who has committed an injury shall be made to suffer at least as much pain as he has inflicted. But the full possession which this passion, when once introduced, takes of the memory, in consequence of the repeated recollection of its object, seldom fails to banish every rational consideration, and to induce the mind to exaggerate greatly the evil suffered, the retaliation that is due, and the propriety of exacting that retaliation.

It is an exercise of good sense or of wisdom to approve of rational and excellent conduct; and it is also a proper exercise of the understanding

to be dissatisfied with those actions which have a tendency to derange the order of society, and to injure individuals in it. A man of sense, therefore, cannot avoid regarding pernicious and irrational conduct with disapprobation or dislike; and he must account it a part of his duty to remedy the bad effects of such conduct, and to prevent a repetition of it, either by improving the character of the party who committed the mischief, or by adopting such measures as may deprive him of the power or the inclination to do farther harm. It is, therefore, rational both to dislike a bad man, and to endeavour to prevent, by whatever measures may be necessary, his committing future mischief. This dislike, however, is totally different from the passion of revenge. As we do not call the approbation of intellectual worth a benevolent affection; so neither, when correctly exerted, ought we to call the disapprobation and dislike of irrational conduct towards ourselves or others a malevolent affection or passion. In the case of injuries, sustained by ourselves, however, they are extremely apt to occupy the memory, and thereby to convert that which, when moderately exerted, would amount only to just disapprobation, into a vehement and unreasonable passion of revenge. Hence arises the difficulty of attaining to that degree of self-command, or candour and moderation of spirit, which may enable an injured

person to consider what his own moral interest, and that of society at large, require.

The rational and only unexceptionable principle which can be acted upon, with regard to injuries offered to us, seems to be this : A virtuous man ought to recollect, that the only business or duty required of him in this world, is to acquire for himself an accomplished intellectual character, and to perform a part in the business of society, with a view to assist others to do the same. If these great objects are in no respect impeded, or if he is in no degree disqualified for the performance of them by the injury he has sustained, it ought undoubtedly to be disregarded ; for this reason, that, by seeking retaliation, he would infallibly commit a certain degree of mischief, without gaining any valuable object whereby it might be compensated. He would also incur the hazard of disturbing the peace of society, and, what is worse, of kindling in his own mind, and, perhaps ultimately in that of another, an irrational passion of revenge ; which in itself is ~~always a moral calamity~~, and all the bad consequences of which he cannot possibly foresee. On the contrary, if the result of an injury thus unresented would be to ~~disqualify~~ the suffering party for the fulfilment of ~~any~~ important duty, he ought undoubtedly to act in a different manner. This may occur, either when his pro-

perty is injured in such a form as might afford a pernicious example of successful violence, or in such a degree as might deprive him of the means of fulfilling the duties and engagements connected with his station in society : Or, it may occur in the case of such an injury offered to his personal respectability, as if not resented would disqualify him for ever after from possessing any degree of usefulness in the world. In both of these cases, although the passion of revenge, considered as a habit of thought leading captive the understanding, ought never to be indulged ; yet retaliation of evil is not only justifiable, but necessary.

In the case of injuries offered to property, the laws of society usually afford a sufficient remedy ; and no other ought to be sought. In the case of certain personal injuries, however, in consequence of the ancient barbarous laws of Europe, a custom has been established, by which, if men in particular stations in society were to have recourse to that sort of redress which, legal authority now affords, they would be rendered for ever afterwards utterly incapable of fulfilling the most important duties of life. If a military officer should suffer falsehood to be publicly ascribed to him, or the slightest violence to be offered to his person, without solemnly defying and encountering his antagonist in single combat with mortal weapons, he

would, by our customs, instantly be disqualified from serving his country in the station to which he had been educated ; and his family, if he have one, might be reduced along with him to poverty and shame. In such a case, the most virtuous and rational man has evidently no choice left with regard to the conduct which he is to adopt ; and the self-command, which it is his duty to cultivate, will usually render him extremely formidable, and afford him the best chance of safety. The guilty party is the one who originally commits an action which necessarily produces such dreadful consequences, and not he who is involuntarily compelled to protect, at every hazard, the place which he occupies in society, and his whole prospects of future usefulness in its service. If nations wish to extinguish this barbarous practice, they ought not to enact laws, absurdly menacing, with equal punishment, the injured individual, who reluctantly protects his own personal respectability, and him who wantonly brings that respectability into hazard. The law with regard to duelling, which would reduce it to reason, and thereby nearly extinguish the practice, ought to be this : The party who was involuntarily brought into such circumstances, that, without avowedly assaulting the life of his antagonist, he could not preserve his place or his personal estimation among men, ought to



be held innocent, whatever the consequences may have been. He, on the contrary, who unjustly gave the original offence, ought to be accounted guilty. If he have fallen, it is a misfortune for which nobody but himself is responsible ; but if he have destroyed the life of his antagonist, he ought undoubtedly to be accounted guilty of murder.

The passion of envy always demonstrates that the mind entertaining it is far from worth or excellence. They who judge rationally concerning the relative importance of different objects of pursuit, know that nothing is truly and ultimately valuable excepting a virtuous, that is, an enlightened and resolute mind : But it can be no injury to one man, that another has acquired a very great degree of wisdom and fortitude ; on the contrary, it is of the utmost advantage, as it may facilitate the progress of others in improvement. For let it be supposed that two men, possessed of equal talents and information, commence at the same time two different courses of study ; let it be supposed that they are both at present good chemists and good mechanics ; let the one proceed industriously for a year longer in the first of these studies, and let the other proceed for the same period in the other ; let them meet again at the end of the year, and communicate to each other the detail of their experiments, and the history

of their discoveries and projects—they will be able to do so in the space of a few days, or at most of a few weeks. At the end of a few weeks, then, or even of a few days from the conclusion of the year, each of them will possess as much knowledge as if he had studied during two whole years, and spent the one of them in the study of chemistry and the other in the study of mechanics. It is thus that for another man to acquire wisdom is one of the greatest blessings that can occur to me; and it is thus that, in proportion as knowledge is generally diffused, its progress to perfection becomes more speedy; and the multitude of labourers will probably at last render it rapid beyond our present conception. For a man of an enlightened mind, then, to envy another man's progress in knowledge, and to be dissatisfied and unhappy on account of it, is a thing which one would suppose cannot possibly occur. To think of envying the vigour and activity with which another man diffuses wisdom around him, and protects the interests of reason and of justice in the world, would be still more absurd. It would be equivalent to a complaint, that our best interests are promoted, our labours rendered easy, and that our most important pursuit has been successful.

It is true, that they who value other objects besides wisdom and its exertions may very rea-

dily become subject to the wretched and painful sentiment of envy. As the tongues of men cannot be occupied with the praises of more than a small number of individuals at a time, he who pursues fame as a valuable object, and cannot attain it, may readily be disposed to envy a more successful candidate. He who values riches will naturally envy the rich; because one man's riches do not necessarily confer riches upon another.' He who values strength or beauty; or has fixed his wishes upon the acquisition of fine horses, a splendid dwelling, a beautiful wife, or any such external object, will no doubt be mortified if he is disappointed or excelled in any of these. But so far as a man loses his self-command on account of such objects, he is a stranger to wisdom; he has not discovered what is truly excellent and worthy of being pursued; and is yet a mere child, chasing butterflies and toys and trifles, and becoming peevish, because his playfellows have had better fortune than himself.

When two persons are in pursuit of any object which both cannot possess completely, the one will often be fearful or jealous lest the other obtain it. Jealousy, therefore, is a kind of envy upon foresight; he who is now jealous will hereafter be envious; and hence the expressions are sometimes confounded. In every point of view, however, jealousy is one of the

forms of folly. It always implies that a man values something else than the improvement of his rational nature ; that he has forgotten the purpose of his existence ; that he came not into the world to enjoy pleasure, or to obtain possession of external objects, but to become enlightened and upright in his character, master of himself and of his thoughts, attached only to the pursuit of excellence, and capable of cultivating it by acting according to the dictates of an unembarrassed judgment.

It appears, then, that in proportion as a man becomes truly wise, and learns to appreciate objects justly, and in proportion as he acquires the command of his own mind, he will become superior to the malevolent passions. Even the severity with which he regards the guilty will be softened, when he comes to perceive accurately their frame and their frailty. Every bad action implies either an error in judgment, inducing a man to pursue what is not truly valuable, or a weakness of nature and want of that self-command which enables us to resist temptation. A wise man will therefore regard the unworthy with much regret : Their folly and their weakness will in his eyes render them objects of compassion. He will therefore labour for their amendment ; and will consider a real misfortune as occurring in the universe, when a mind, that might have aspired with

success to the acquisition of wisdom, lavishes its energies vainly away upon the pursuits of ambition or of avarice, or loses and buries them in sensuality and vanity. When forced by his duty to society to resist, or to contrive the destruction of those whose conduct is extensively and deeply pernicious, he will proceed with regret, but with caution and firmness, without anger or malice.

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## CHAP. XII.

### OF THE PASSION OF AVARICE.

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THE necessity of providing for our subsistence, the dread of failure in this important pursuit, and the pleasure which the exertion of activity always produces, give rise to the desire of hoarding, usually denominated the *passion of avarice*. In the progress of society, money becomes the representative of what is called *wealth*; that is to say, of the means of subsistence and of accommodation. Money, therefore, is usually the object of this passion.

Considering the matter in general, nothing

can appear more absurd than that superfluity of wealth which, without intending to apply it to any use, a covetous man is so eager to obtain. But such is the tendency of the mind of man to become fond of any object which has long occupied its attention, that it is impossible to exaggerate the blind vehemence with which the love of money is capable of laying hold of the human heart. Indeed, the history of all ages assures us, that the entire dominion which avarice assumes over the mind, renders it more completely subversive than any other passion, of all regard for intellectual worth, or for any thing that has a tendency to promote the welfare of mankind. Sparta, Athens, and Rome, fell before it, when it had taught the citizens to prefer themselves to their country, and to regard private riches as preferable to integrity and public spirit. Individuals have resisted this passion ; but no people has yet been found whom it has been unable, at the long-run, to overthrow. For a time they may have made a vigorous stand against it ; but, under certain circumstances, it has always proved successful.

When a poor man sets about amassing wealth, he necessarily becomes cautious in his actions. He must consider well the nature of every undertaking in which he is about to engage, and count the cost ; and survey with accuracy every

possibility of failure. He must rise up early in the morning, and acquire habits of industry, of self-command, and of abstinence from every costly pleasure. He must not only do so, but he must acquire the reputation of having done so, by avoiding the society of the idle and the gay, and even perhaps of the ambitious and the learned, that he may frequent more zealously the company of those who, being engaged in similar pursuits with himself, can give the best information of pecuniary advantages to be obtained, or dangers to be avoided. He must fulfil with punctuality every engagement made by him, that men may have confidence in the affluence of his circumstances; for, above all things, he must avoid the appearance of poverty. A successful general, a skilful physician, a learned lawyer, a celebrated poet, or a profound philosopher, may be accounted careless of their private affairs, without injury to the respect which mankind entertain for them; but nothing can be more fatal than such a suspicion to a man engaged in commerce, that is to say, in the pursuit of riches.

By this train of conduct, a man will gradually learn to keep the object of his pursuit continually in view. As he whose only wish is the acquisition of ~~an~~ enlightened mind, will often reflect on the nature of that perfection at which he aims, and upon the means of attaining it; as

he who seeks military glory will occupy himself in devising modes of attack and defence ; as the poet must labour to enrich his fancy, and the physician to extend his knowledge of nature ; so a man, who makes the pursuit of wealth the business of his life, will meditate continually on the means of attaining it, and the lucrative advantages to be derived from every new occurrence. He will examine the productions of every art, with no other view but to discover if they can be rendered the means of gain. He will discern no beauty or excellence in the works of nature, unless so far as they can be rendered profitable. When the wind blows, he will think of the hazard of the sea, and the propriety of insurance. He will see nothing in the rising sun but a cheap candle to light him to his labours. When he travels, he will consider every new scene as beautiful or barren according to the opportunity which it affords of making lucrative bargains ; and when he remains at home, he will measure time by the periods of receiving money, or of giving it away. The expectation of the former will make the hours seem too slow, and the dread of the latter will give them the appearance of rapidity. Thus the passion of avarice, or the love of money, can scarcely fail gradually to occupy his mind. He will think of nothing else by day, he will dream of nothing else by night, but money ; and his imagination, or his memory,



will present to him no images but those of profit and loss. Love is disappointed or gratified, and there it ends. Ambitious men may sometimes reach the summit of their wishes ; and, even in the midst of their career, the pride of spirit and vehemence of character which they usually possess, will at times lead them to disregard their principal object. But avarice is a steady passion. It has no intervals, and can never be fully gratified. All other passions have temporary periods of relaxation and calmness. This calm is the period at which avarice interposes, and presents prospects of profit. These are weighed ; and reasoned upon ; and, when men yield to them, they think they are acting, not from a worthless and narrow sentiment, but upon principles of deliberate reason and superior wisdom. Thus the covetous man often possesses a portion of that self-approbation which ought to belong to virtue ; and hence the love of money is better fitted than any other passion, to tame the fiercest spirits, and to subdue the most determined integrity. The barbarous nations that overwhelmed the Roman empire were softened by means of it. Among them every man was entitled to avenge his own quarrels, or those of his family ; and the magistrate had no right to prevent his doing so : But that vehement spirit of revenge, which the laws could not openly oppose, they undermined by the aid of Avarice. They allowed

every criminal to purchase with money a pardon from the injured party. This mode of expiation soon operated so powerfully, that men learned to regard the slaughter of their nearest relations as sufficiently compensated by a pecuniary penalty. For the desire of amassing money is not one of the follies of youth ; it captivates old age by the circumspection and appearance of rationality by which it leads us to act. Hence it seems to increase in proportion as other appetites and wishes pass away, and to gather strength from the failure of every tie that might be expected to bind us to life. It even leads men absurdly to attempt to perpetuate the enjoyment of their possessions, and to contrive and impose legal restraints to render them inalienable from their name and family : And thus this careful and persevering passion scarcely leaves us in the grave itself.

A man engrossed by avarice will look with reverence upon the men who have already obtained those riches which he so eagerly pursues. He will teach his children to respect them, and will regard them as the greatest of mankind. The blind pursuit of money, however, is so absurd in itself, that in early life the human mind usually revolts against it. While youth remains, therefore, the children of a man who is greedily attached to wealth will probably find in themselves the love of pleasure more powerful than

the love of money. As for the principles of enlightened and liberal wisdom, they will never hear of them; pleasure will therefore be their great object of pursuit, and riches will only be valued on account of the pleasures they can command. As age advances, however, and the relish for other enjoyments passes away, their early education will have its effect. They were taught to regard the possession of wealth as their supreme good, and as the chief source of distinction in society. They have found that it afforded the means of obtaining every ordinary and vulgar pleasure; and they at last learn to love it for its own sake, and to labour to attain it as the only rational object of pursuit. Thus wisdom is banished, and the world comes by degrees to be filled with young men who are lovers of voluptuousness, and with old men who are lovers of money.

Let us imagine, for an instant, that a people should exist, among whom the love of wealth, or the passion of avarice, should be very generally diffused, and consider the consequences to their character. Wisdom, integrity, and public spirit, if attended with poverty, would be looked upon with contempt. Intellectual accomplishments would only be valued in proportion to the sum of money that could be procured by means of them. The improvement of our rational nature, and the wisdom which teaches us

to regard wealth, and pleasure, and personal aggrandisement, as unimportant, when placed in competition with the interests of reason and the welfare of mankind, would be regarded as romantic folly. Money would be sought by every means. Women who are poor would sell their chastity to men who are rich. If the people were free, the poor man would sell his liberty to the rich, and the rich would barter it with each other for gain. The man with the longest purse would be the legislator of the state. The blood of nations would be bought and sold. All ranks would vote, would fight, would swear falsely, would make a noise or be silent, for money, or at the command of the highest bidder. If a parent should, in such a country, venture to tell his child that he ought to account the attainment of an upright and enlightened mind the only valuable or respectable object of pursuit, his admonitions would be fruitless. No sooner does the child enter the world, than he receives a very different lesson. He finds that poverty is disgraceful, and that riches are honourable ; that wisdom consists in the successful pursuit of them ; and that the possession of them procures respect and influence, and every external advantage that ever talents or integrity pretended to command. It is truly a moral calamity to be born among such a people ; for as man is greatly the creature of education, it is equiva-

lent to being born with the certainty of becoming irrational and worthless. If it be true of an individual, that it were better he had never existed than that he should become sensual and covetous, and remain a stranger to truth and wisdom ; it may surely well be said of a people composed of such men, that it were far better they were swept off from the face of that creation, on which their numbers only render them more conspicuous as a blot and a dishonour.

This subject will again occur when I come to consider the character and pursuits of men when united into communities or nations. In the mean time, it must be observed, that notwithstanding the remarks now made, it is far from being easy to fix the precise degree of estimation which wealth, or the pursuit of it, ought to hold in the mind of a virtuous man.

A certain portion of wealth is absolutely necessary to subsistence ; and however absurd the blind and eager passion for more of it than is necessary may be, yet, like every other human pursuit, it becomes the means of calling forth our talents, of teaching us knowledge, and of improving, to a certain degree, the understanding of every man employed in it. In consequence of avarice, as an incitement to activity, the invention is exerted, perseverance and vigilance are acquired, every art is brought to perfection, the secrets of nature are unfolded, the powers of man are in-

creased, and the winds and the waves become subservient to his will. Hence arises the superiority possessed by the skilful Europeans over the indolent and ignorant original inhabitants of Africa and America. Hence also arises the superior usefulness of a British merchant, employed in supplying the wants of distant nations, over a Spanish gentleman or Hidalgo, who spends his time in loitering about the decayed castle of his ancestors, and idly, meditating upon their dignity and his own illustrious rank.

By the industry and skill which are acquired in the pursuit of riches, the productions of the earth are multiplied, the human race becomes numerous, and new arts are invented. The efforts of numbers united are irresistible. By the skilful division of labour, under the direction of men who have no other employment but that of acquiring knowledge, and regulating the efforts of others, the former abundance is increased without end, a greater portion of intelligence is made to exist, and effects are produced, of which the same people, while yet a poor and a petty tribe of wandering barbarians, could have formed no conception. We know how many excellent books have been written, which would never have been thought of, even by their own authors, had not the desire of acquiring money stimulated their exertions. Every day new and ingenious inventions are produced to the world,

which have cost much time and labour, but which originated merely in the love of gain.

The arts which men invent to facilitate the acquisition of wealth, are so intricate in their nature, that no man can practise them all at once, or prepare, by his own labour, the various commodities for which he has occasion. By the pursuit of riches, therefore, artists are made subservient to each other, and all are made to depend upon all. Thus men learn their own importance in society, as well as the importance of other men. The animosities subsisting between barbarous families and tribes are gradually done away, and the human race are taught to regard each other as brethren. The extension of commerce introduces distant nations to the acquaintance of each other; and thus puts an end to the prejudices which formerly arose from a difference of customs, of governments, and of religion. A foreigner is no longer regarded as an enemy, but as a person from a connection with whom important advantages may be derived. Extensive ideas of justice and humanity are thus introduced. Those barbarous notions of patriotism are exploded, which anciently taught the citizens of every state to regard murder and treachery and robbery as just and honourable, when committed for the aggrandisement of their country. The illiberal spirit is done away which led us to regard the destruction of every prosperous

people as necessary to our own welfare. It is found that the wealth of a neighbouring state only renders it a better market for our merchandise ; and that, in the general case, few calamities can befall it which will not speedily be felt by ourselves. Thus the pursuit of riches dissipates the inveteracy of hostile nations, and produces enlightened principles of equity. And thus, while statesmen, disregarding good faith and honesty, are continually forming plans to aggrandize themselves at the expence of all their neighbours, an extensive merchant is willing to act upon fair and liberal principles, takes no undue advantage, fulfils every engagement with the utmost scrupulousness, and delights in enriching all with whom he becomes connected.

In the earliest part, indeed, of the career of nations towards riches, the pursuit of them is apt to produce much jealousy and injustice among individuals engaged in the same employment. The history of every commercial country affords instances of bankers, merchants and every kind of tradesmen, attempting to ruin each other through mistaken notions of rivalship. They seem to have imagined that there exists only a certain limited portion of wealth in the world ; and that if their neighbour got a large share of it, a smaller one must necessarily remain for them. But farther investigation discovers the fallacy of this reasoning, and shews that natu-



rally and originally there is little or no wealth in the world ; that all riches are the product of industry ; and that, in proportion as industry is exerted, riches will be made to increase. Instead of being an injury, then, the industry of our neighbour is an advantage to us, because it creates wealth which otherwise would never have existed : And we know that it is easier to become rich in the vicinity of the rich than of the poor ; for the same reason, that a man who would acquire a great fortune does not retire to an uncultivated or obscure corner of the country, but hastens to place himself in the midst of a populous and wealthy city, where something is to be got. The skilful pursuit of wealth, therefore, tends to the extinction of jealousy among private persons, and leads every man to support his neighbour, and to wish that he may prosper.

One circumstance attending the progress of the arts, to which the pursuit and increase of riches has given rise, adds much to the advantages now mentioned : This is the stability which they give to society, and the security which they afford of the permanence of civilization in the world. In ancient times this was not the case. Rich nations, gradually losing their martial habits, were always ready to fall a prey to their poor and barbarous, but more brave and hardy neighbours. On the contrary, it is now the rich

nations that encroach upon the poor ones. In the progress of mechanical skill, the art of war has been improved into an expensive and intricate system. The engines of attack and defence are of such a nature, that none but a wealthy people, abounding in commerce and in artists, can possibly procure them in their full extent. Such an invasion of barbarians as that which overturned the Roman empire would not now be formidable. A million of Tartars, each armed with his bow, his lance, and his sword, would quickly perish before the strong fortresses of the south of Europe. Before a civilized and rich nation can now be conquered, the invaders must themselves have attained to a very considerable degree of civilization and of riches. In their new territories, they would naturally pursue that career of arts upon which they had already entered. Although, therefore, the progress of mankind towards knowledge, arts, and wealth, might be delayed by wars and conquest, it would not now, as at the fall of the Roman empire, be altogether put an end to, till a new progress could be commenced ; but after an interruption of a few years, it would proceed as formerly.

Whoever, therefore, by a course of fair industry, increases his own riches, and consequently the riches of the world, or whoever has devised the means by which agriculture and commerce may be increased, is entitled to regard himself

as having performed very valuable services to the universe. He has rendered his own mind, in no small degree, persevering, skilful, vigilant, and active. By rendering the means of subsistence and accommodation more abundant, his conduct has had a tendency to improve the human race as intelligent beings. By his means they are enabled to increase their own numbers, and to turn their attention from meaner cares to the improvement of their rational nature. By the increase of wealth, books, like other commodities, are rendered more cheap and abundant. Knowledge becomes easier to be purchased than formerly. Like other luxuries, it is widely diffused by an enlarged commerce ; but, unlike to other luxuries, it elevates our nature towards excellence, and almost expiates the crimes which the love of gain has induced mankind to commit.

Seeing, then, that the pursuit of riches has a tendency to produce so much mischief and unworthiness in the world, and seeing, at the same time, that it has a tendency to produce so much good, by calling forth the exertion of an immense quantity of invention and ability, what part ought a wise man to act with regard to it ? It is easier in speculation to give a good answer to this question, than it is to act upon it with strict propriety.

The path of duty, or that which reason here

points out, is this : So far as subsistence is concerned, a wise man will pursue riches, because to that extent they are necessary to his existence, and consequently to his intellectual improvement. He will even go farther than this : For if he is not employed in promoting directly the progress of wisdom, he will labour to accomplish this indirectly, by endeavouring to promote the wealth of his country, and of mankind, which may have the effect of diffusing arts and intelligence more extensively over the face of this globe. But he will not suffer himself to become so stupid, or his understanding to fall so completely asleep, as to pursue wealth for its own sake, and for the mere purpose of hoarding it up, and contemplating it with delight ; that is to say, he will not suffer the passion of avarice to enter his mind. There is much difficulty in this, however. The human mind becomes so imperceptibly fond of the objects that occupy its thoughts, that the utmost attention is scarcely sufficient to prevent this passion from stealing into the mind. To avoid this, the highest vigilance is necessary. It must often be recollected that riches of themselves are of no value ; that though the pursuit of them may be necessary to rouse the activity of ignorant men, yet that the possession of them to an individual is of little importance indeed. They can even seldom be rendered the means of doing direct good, that is

to say, of producing excellence. For although Providence improves men in an oblique manner, by leading them to pursue wealth, yet to bestow it at once upon them has usually a contrary effect. Although a very rich man, then, can do some harm in the world, he can seldom do much good. If he bestow his riches upon an individual, he injures that individual, by depriving him of at least one inducement to the exertion of his talents. The best use of great wealth, therefore, often consists in scattering it prudently among many persons, so as to produce as little mischief as possible ; that is to say, so as not to render the acquisition of more of it unnecessary to them. But while man remains in this world, it is to be feared that the necessity of pursuing a certain degree of wealth will always render the passion of avarice a dangerous rock in his way towards a very high degree of intellectual excellence. The only security against that passion will be found to consist in the clear discernment of what is truly valuable, and worthy of being sought after by a rational being.

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## CHAP. XIII.

### OF SELF-LOVE.

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THE pleasures we enjoy and the evils we endure in life, by fixing themselves in the memory, produce an habitual desire of obtaining the one and of avoiding the other. This desire obtains the appellation of *self-love*. It is not a particular and distinct passion, but rather a general term, expressing the result or effect upon the human mind, of occupying itself in frequent meditation upon the pleasures it has enjoyed, and of indulging in wishes for their repetition. Even the benevolent affections are in this respect selfish, that they are indulged on account of the pleasure they produce. They all arise out of our feelings as individuals, and terminate in an attention to these feelings. Hence it is that self-love, which may be said to include all the passions, has for its objects the preservation of ourselves as individuals, the increase of our individual pleasures, and the diminution of the pains we endure.

This passion, when suffered to prevail and act without controul, is not less blind than any other passion, and is apt to lead men very far from the conduct which an enlightened understanding would approve. It leads men to prefer their present fancies and temporary gratifications to the lasting felicity which would arise from the improvement of their nature; and thus it defeats its own purposes. It has a great tendency to place mankind in a state of opposition to each other. Hence a combination of selfish men is easily broken. Such a combination is indeed very powerful, so long as its members are brought into no personal hazard; but as soon as this takes place, it becomes easy to divide them, and consequently to overcome the whole; for as each acts only for himself, the general welfare can be nothing to him when his share of it is lost. This is one of the reasons why selfish men so often govern the world in peaceable times; but in periods of political trouble they are frightened off the stage. They call themselves moderate men. Under this pretence of moderation, which is mere cowardice or selfishness, they leave the field to more ardent spirits, and are disposed of at pleasure by every successive party.

In the hands of Nature, however, this passion produces many good effects. Without it the human race could not have long subsisted; it in-

duces us to labour with incessant care for our own safety and subsistence ; and thus it excites us to that constant activity, which ultimately produces our intellectual improvement. Amidst all the miseries of life, this passion usually proves sufficient to enable men and women to abstain from those means of self-destruction which are at every moment within their reach. It even tends, at times, to correct its own extravagancies. Our love of praise, for example, could not be gratified, were we avowedly, on all occasions, to prefer ourselves to others : that the passion may be gratified, therefore, it must sometimes give way ; and thus self-love may assume the form of self-denial.

The passion of self-love points out our duty, and often leads us unconsciously to its fulfilment. In this world, it is not always in our power to do much for others ; whereas it is always in our power to labour for our own preservation and improvement as individuals. It is therefore our duty to labour for ourselves in the first instance ; and this duty the passion of self-love leads us to perform. It is the business of a wise man to subdue the passion so far as it may have a tendency to mislead him, and to fulfil the duty because it is a duty ; that is, because it is necessary to his own intellectual improvement. As this improvement, or the production of accomplished minds in the universe,



is the final object which renders self-preservation valuable, he will not prefer the means to the end, or the preservation of his life to the rectitude of his character, or the intellectual amelioration of mankind ; for this would be to prefer mere existence to excellence, and a single, and not very worthy mind, to a multitude of minds.

Upon this principle we can determine the celebrated question, How far self-preservation is universally a duty, and self-destruction on any occasion justifiable? It is to be observed, that a man is as truly the destroyer of his own life, when he places himself in a situation in which others will certainly, or in all probability, take it away, as when he does it with his own hands. The rule of duty, in such cases, seems to be this : if the loss of a man's life is necessary to the fulfilment of his duty ; that is, to the preservation, or to the moral welfare of a large portion of mankind, it becomes his duty to hazard or sacrifice it. When no such purpose can be accomplished, life ought to be carefully preserved as the means of his personal improvement. The story of the death of Samson, in the Jewish history, affords an instance of suicide committed for a patriotic and justifiable purpose. But the physical calamities of life afford no justification of it. ' The saying of Epictetus upon this subject is therefore morally erroneous : " If your house smoke, walk out of it ;" meaning there-

by, that it is lawful to relinquish life as soon as it becomes in any degree disagreeable. On the contrary, man is made to encounter sufferings in this world, that his nature may be improved by enduring them. He who, instead of struggling against hardships, seeks in the grave a refuge from their violence, resembles a school-boy, who runs away from his task, and thereby loses the opportunity of receiving that education which might render his character valuable.

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#### CHAP. XIV.

OF AMBITION, EMULATION, PRIDE, &c. AND THE  
LOVE OF PRAISE.

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**T**HUS far I have only taken notice of those passions which arise from the pleasure excited by the exertion of activity ; but I also remarked, that the human mind takes delight in the contemplation of excellence, or of perfection of intellect ; and that it regards with uneasiness every appearance of defectiveness, or degradation of mind. The pleasure derived from the contem-

plation of real or supposed excellence, and the uneasiness produced by the reverse of this quality, are lodged in the memory, and sometimes give rise to habitual affections, or a passionate fondness for the one and averseness to the other. I now proceed to consider some of these affections or passions. Among them may be numbered ambition, emulation, pride, and the love of praise.

1st. Ambition is the love of power. The word power, in its original meaning, denotes certain operations of the mind. When a man makes a voluntary effort to direct, in a particular way, either his senses, or the train of his ideas, or his limbs; and when these obey his will, their obedience is said to arise from the *power* which his mind possesses over them. Power, then, implies two things; an effort of mind, and an effect following that effort. I wish, or will, that my hand should be lifted to uncover my head before a person to whom I wish to exhibit marks of respect, and my hand is lifted up accordingly. I know not how it happens, that a wish or effort of will should in this way be followed by an external movement; for we know not what is the substance or essence of which either the mind or the body consists. The fact, however, is certain; for we are conscious of it, that the one of these does instantly follow the other, and is conjoined with it in our constitution when it is in a sound state. In like

manner, when I observe another man lifting his hand to give or to return a salutation, I conclude that he does so in consequence of an effort or wish of his mind. His mind is indeed invisible, and its efforts can only be inferred from external appearances; but from the similarity of actions, I conclude that there exists a similarity of causes or efforts. In both cases, we understand a man's power to signify the external effects that can be produced by an exertion of his mind or will. When great effects are produced, we infer the existence of great mind, or of great skill and energy; and trifling effects are regarded as arising from a feeble mind. Great effects are therefore regarded with approbation or pleasure; and trifling effects with aversion and contempt. When the effects are produced by our own exertions, the pleasure is greater on account of our interest in the event, and on account of our entire certainty of an actual exertion of mind. From the repetition of this self-approving pleasure, a fondness for the enjoyment of it gradually arises; that is, a love of power, or a desire of producing great effects by an exertion of our will.

No sooner does this love of power or ambition take full possession of the memory, and become a habit and a settled affection, than it degenerates, and urges men to gratify it by producing, or acquiring the means of producing,

great events and changes in the world, without considering whether the production of these events is a proof of superiority of mind or not. The arrangements of society, in many cases, favour this growth of ambition as a blind passion. Some men are placed by birth in situations which enable them to move and agitate nations at their pleasure. This gives them a semblance of the possession of great energy of mind. The vulgar, trusting to appearances, give them credit for the possession of this energy, and regard them with admiration ; they themselves are deceived by flattery, and by the opinion of the multitude, into a notion of their own superiority ; hence they often become altogether intoxicated by ambition ; they become boundless in their lust of dominion, and set no other limit to their enterprises than the subjugation of all around them. So powerfully does this passion engross the human mind, that history affords many examples of aged men, the ministers of princes, who, upon losing the power and favour they possessed, have absolutely died of a broken heart.

Yet in the hands of Nature the passion of ambition, even as a passion, does certainly produce some good effects. It leads men to make great efforts of skill and ingenuity. It often produces a contempt of trifles, an elevation of mind, and an intrepidity of character, which cannot be re-

garded without approbation. A young man, who is animated by it, proceeds in his education with great vigour and alacrity. In manhood it produces industry, enterprise, courage, and ability; and it always leads its possessors to act a conspicuous part in the world.

Ambition is so frequently allied to success in life, or at least to imposing talents and splendid accomplishments, that it has become an extremely popular passion. Mankind admire those who are actuated by it, forgive their crimes, and wish that the same passion may appear in their own children. Poets and historians record and celebrate the actions of ambitious men. We learn to rejoice at their success, and to sympathise with their feelings in every reverse of fortune. This arises chiefly, no doubt, from the admiration of power or apparent energy; but it also arises in some degree from an admiration of the accomplishments often possessed by the ambitious. In every age, however, mankind have suffered sufficiently by their admiration of ambitious men, and of power and eminence of station. They have seen their blood flow in torrents, their habitations laid in ruins, and the whole fruits of their industry consumed, to gratify the pride of men whose ambition they had soothed and fostered, by bowing down before it, and accounting it honourable.

The passion of ambition in itself is altogether

irrational. The perfection of the voluntary power of the mind, or to possess complete command over our organs and ideas, is undoubtedly of boundless importance; but the desire which sometimes arises out of it, to possess the means of turning the world upside down, or to compel men to act, not in obedience to their own understandings, but to our will, is unquestionably absurd. This kind of power is by no means to be regarded as indicating intellectual excellence, for it has sometimes been enjoyed by the most feeble and contemptible of mortals. It may sometimes be the duty of a virtuous man to enter into that strife in which the ambitious are engaged; but it will be to baffle their efforts, and to protect mankind against their rage; for it can never be his duty to seek power for its own sake as a valuable object of pursuit.

Ambition, then, like all the other passions, is useful in the hand of Providence for rousing the human mind to activity; but in itself it ought to be regarded as an irrational sentiment which it is our duty to subdue, seeing it often leads us away from the pursuit of the great object for which alone we exist in the world.

2d. When we observe other persons acting in a manner that demonstrates them to be possessed of skill and resolution, we approve or take pleasure in the contemplation of their conduct, and desire to resemble them. This produces imita-

tion. When there is reason to believe that we may equal or excel those whom we admire, our desire to resemble or excel them is apt to grow into the passion of emulation.—So far as the perceptive faculty of the understanding is concerned, the inferior animals appear to possess minds similar to our own. Accordingly, they discern intelligence in other beings, and imitate and emulate their exertions. Thus the horse strives in the race, and the monkey attempts to perform actions resembling those of man.

The objects which emulation leads us to pursue are as various as the fancies of men, concerning what is valuable or uncommon, or what will most fully display superiority of character.

Great Julius, on the mountains bred,  
A flock, perhaps, or herd had led ;  
He who the world subdued, had been  
But the best wrestler on the green.

Superiority being the general object of emulation, it is sought by individuals by such means as are within their reach. Wrestlers, boxers, drunkards, and gluttons, have all aspired to distinction by the display of their qualifications in these points. In the workshop of a tradesman, a lover of superiority, or a man inspired by emulation, will strive to excel in his profession. Place him among the learned, and he will pursue high literary accomplishments; among commer-



cial men, his character would assume the form either of enterprise or avarice; and if his situation enabled him to interfere in public affairs, he would be ambitious. This, therefore, is both a distinct passion in itself and a stimulant to other passions. In weak minds it is apt to assume the form of jealousy or envy.

The benefits which are produced by this passion, acting as an incitement to exertion, are sufficiently obvious. Like every other passion, however, it is blind in itself, and has a tendency to mislead the mind from its proper pursuit. It fixes our attention, not upon what is wise and excellent, but upon what men are pleased to regard as such; and it leads us to keep in view, not perfection, but what other men have hitherto attained, which must be imperfection at best. Our duty, therefore, is to lay aside the passion, and on all occasions to pursue what is wise and right, without regard to what others may have thought or done.

37. The satisfaction which results from the perception of worth or excellence existing in ourselves, is so great, that it is apt to be unduly indulged. For the sake of enjoying this pleasure, some men are often disposed to take a review of their own characters, with the hope of discovering qualities to admire. The partiality with which the survey is made usually renders it successful; and if recourse is repeatedly had

to this mode of indulgence, the admiration or applause of ourselves, is apt to become a powerful passion, which renders a man's understanding totally blind to his own imperfections, or even perhaps to the contemptible nature of the qualities upon which he values himself.

Pride is an unsocial and unpopular passion, because it leads a man to wrap himself up in a fancied superiority of character, and to despise or neglect the approbation of mankind. It is attended, however, with this advantage, that it is not a costly passion, as it can be gratified without ostentation. In the feelings with which it is attended, it resembles in every respect what is called a good conscience, or rational self-approbation ; with this difference, that being an obstinate and deep-rooted sentiment, it is not liable to be disturbed by doubts about its own propriety.

Nature renders this passion useful, in consequence of the support which it affords to individuals, under hardships and difficulties ; and from the incitement which it introduces into the mind to avoid acting on any occasion dishonourably, or in a manner that may seem unworthy of the high rank which it has assigned to itself among intelligent beings. On the other hand, nothing can be more fatal than such a passion to progressive improvement of character. It extinguishes that discernment of our own imperfec-

tions, in consequence of which alone they can be remedied; and by representing supreme excellence, as already attained, it puts an end to the pursuit of it.

*4th.* The love of praise arises from weakness. We would wish to be good and excellent beings, but we cannot trust to our own judgment whether we are so or not. We are eager therefore to obtain the applause of others to fortify our own self-approbation. It is so pleasing to be pleased with ourselves, that we are apt to give the most implicit faith to those who tell us of our good qualities; and thus to enjoy self-approbation upon trust, without consulting our own understandings. When this pleasure is frequently indulged in, it is apt to produce a very powerful passion, which possesses influence at times over all human beings.

Without some degree of self-approbation, life is perhaps absolutely intolerable. None, however, but persons possessed of very powerful minds indeed, can rest altogether satisfied with their own approbation of themselves, unless their opinion is supported and aided by the corresponding opinion of some other person. Hence there is no one so obscure or so vile as not to hope for the approbation of somebody; and there is no human being so elevated by fortune as not to be deeply wounded by the contempt or obloquy of mankind. The love of praise

gives force and energy to many other passions, and often produces ambition, emulation, and avarice, where they would not otherwise have existed. We often love power and superiority, chiefly because they secure to us the admiration and applause of mankind. Avarice itself would seldom acquire much influence over the human mind, were not men dazzled by riches, and did they not procure for their possessors celebrity and respect. The wants of Nature are easily supplied, and more than they require is chiefly coveted as the means of distinction, though, by degrees, the hoarding appetite no doubt increases, and produces the love of money for its own sake.

With most men, the fear of contempt, and the desire of being distinguished and applauded by their associates, is capable, at times, of surmounting every other passion. The love of ease, of pleasure, and even of existence itself, are daily sacrificed to it. Fame or honour has been accounted a sufficient reward for all the labours that man can undertake, and for all the hardships that he can possibly endure. Life seems a trifling sacrifice when thrown away to purchase renown. \*Nothing can be more unreal than this imaginary reward, yet nothing can be more powerful than the hope of it.\* On the field of battle, and on the scaffold, it enables men to act with the appearance at least of indifference. During life, it animates the efforts of mechanics.

poets, philosophers, warriors, and statesmen; and in the last moments of existence it gives us an interest in futurity. When Cæsar found himself perishing by a successful conspiracy, he covered his face with his robe, that in the act of dying he might betray no unseemly disorder. The celebrated Lucretia surrendered her chastity to avoid infamy, and then destroyed her life, because the loss of chastity was infamous.

In very weak and frivolous minds, the love of praise assumes the form of the whimsical passion of vanity. This last passion consists of the desire of deriving praise from trifling appearances or circumstances, without regard to realities. As the hero and the statesman, on the great theatre of life, perform the solemn and tragic part of the passion for fame; so the coxcomb, or the frivolous votaries of fashion, under the fantastic figure of vanity, represent it in comedy and farce for the amusement of the world.

The desire of praise, because it puts us in the power of those with whom we associate, is rather a popular passion; and a wish to please is therefore always a strong recommendation towards the favour of those whose approbation we covet. Hence in popular governments, men who are perhaps careless of popularity, excepting as the tool of interest, often pretend a great fondness

for it, because it flatters the ambition or pride of the people, and thus secures their favour\*.

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\* The following passage is to be found in the conclusion of an American publication, entitled, *Incidents of the Insurrection in the Western Parts of Pennsylvania, in the Year 1794* By Hugh H. Brakenridge. Philadelphia: Printed and sold by John McCulloch, No. 1. North Third Street, 1795:—

“ I have now finished the detail which I had in view. That  
 “ my information may not have been correct in all cases ;  
 “ that my memory may have led me into error ; that my  
 “ imagination may have coloured facts, is possible—but that  
 “ I have deviated from the strictness of truth, knowingly, is  
 “ what I will not admit : That I have been under the painful  
 “ necessity of giving touches which may affect the feelings  
 “ of some persons, is evident ; but it has been with all  
 “ the delicacy in my power, consistent with doing justice  
 “ to myself. If I have done them injustice, they have  
 “ the same remedy with me in their power ; an appeal to the  
 “ public. This is the great and respectable tribunal at which  
 “ I stand : For though I have not been arraigned at the bar  
 “ of a court of justice ; yet from the first moment of obloquy  
 “ against me, I have considered myself an arrested man, and  
 “ put upon my country. From that day the morning sun  
 “ shone to me less bright ; the light of night has been more  
 “ obscure ; the human countenance presented nothing but  
 “ suspicion ; the voice of man hurt me ; I almost hated  
 “ life itself. For who can say that I have pursued riches ?  
 “ Who can say I have been a devotee of pleasure ? Who  
 “ can say I do not love fame ? What then have I, if I  
 “ lose the hope of estimation ?” &c. The last words of  
 this quotation are censurable in a moral point of view, as they  
 amount to a public avowal that vanity, or the love of praise,

The love of praise is an useful or a pernicious passion, according to the state of society in which men are placed. Among the virtuous and the wise, it affords to the unexperienced an inducement to that course of life which leads most directly to excellence. In a corrupted age, however, when riches and power, and frivolous accomplishments, are the objects of admiration, the ingenuous heart of a young man may be perverted to avarice, to ambition, and to vanity, even while he is seeking the approbation of those whom he has learned to respect. Thus the vices of the parent may infect and corrupt the rising spirit of his child; and the love of praise, instead of proving an incentive to the acquisition of every good qualification, may be-

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is the great motive of the author's conduct, and they imply that there can be no better motive. Yet he appears to be an intelligent man, and to possess more than common talents. He acted a very difficult part in the events of which he writes. His whole conduct appears to have been dexterous; and altho', in the circumstances of the case, it could scarcely fail to be misrepresented at the time, yet he seems to have proved, that he all along acted in a manner that every friend to his country must approve of. The language above quoted, therefore, is to be accounted for by the tendency which a republican government produces in eminent men to court popular approbation, by pretending to value it above all things; a circumstance which may very readily lead them actually to overvalue it.

come a vile seducer, inspiring crimes and folly, and every unworthy passion.

Fame is not excellence; and therefore a wise man will account it unworthy of his pursuit. If the possession of popularity be at any time necessary to the successful accomplishment of his purposes, he will court it as he would do the possession of money; not because it is of any value in itself, but because it is often a convenient tool, to be made use of in attempting to obtain something more valuable. It has been justly said, that fools pursue fame as a real good; whereas wise men either neglect it altogether, or pursue it as the means of doing good. It is worthy of remark, that as vanity only appears in weak minds, so it has a powerful tendency to render them still weaker. By fixing the thoughts upon frivolous objects, and occupying them continually with false ideas of our own importance, it is apt at last totally to derange the understanding: instances of which I have repeatedly seen, and I believe they are far from being unfrequent. It is also to be observed, that the love of fame often ends in producing infamy, by the crimes which, in the form of avarice, ambition, or even vanity, it leads men to commit. So hazardous to the perfection of our nature is every passion, and even every pursuit, but the direct pursuit of intellectual improvement.



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## CHAP. XV.

### OF CURIOSITY.

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TO acquire knowledge is pleasing, because it is an exertion of activity or voluntary power ; it is also pleasing, because it produces an increase of ideas, or enlargement of intellect, which is attended with self-approbation. These pleasures give rise to the desire of acquiring farther knowledge, which is usually called *curiosity*, and which sometimes becomes a strong passion.

This passion produces good effects, because it urges men to pursue science in the face of difficulties, which the mere approbation of intellectual improvement would never have enabled them to encounter, and far less to surmount.

It is dangerous, however, inasmuch as it sometimes embarrasses the mind, by fixing it down to the endless pursuit of some minute branch of knowledge, to the exclusion of others of more importance. It even sometimes assumes the silly form of an impertinent fond-

ness to become acquainted with other peoples affairs.

It is our duty to pursue knowledge as the means of acquiring acuteness and vigour of mind ; but we ought not to forget the great object of our labour, or lose sight of it, by suffering a weak attachment to any peculiar accomplishment or narrow pursuit to engross our attention, and arrest our progress in general improvement.

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## CHAP. XVI.

### OF THE PASSION FOR REFORMING THE WORLD

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THE pleasure which we derive from self-approbation, and from the contemplation of rectitude of conduct in others, together with the uneasiness with which we regard irrational and disgraceful actions, give rise to a desire of not only doing what is right ourselves, but of preventing mischief or irrational conduct wherever it comes in our way, and, as far as our power extends, of suppressing whatever evils or

improprieties of management we observe in the world. In certain circumstances, when flattered by the hope of success, but at the same time irritated by considerable resistance, this desire of setting the world to rights sometimes takes strong possession of the mind, and kindles into a furious passion.

I do not know that this passion for reforming mankind, or for propagating that which appears good for the human race, or just and right to society at large, has obtained a special name in language, like avarice, ambition, or vanity. There is no doubt, however, that such a passion is liable to occur in the human mind. At times it remains dormant for ages; but when kindled into action, it seldom fails to alter the whole face of society. In the regions of Asia, under the Arabian prophet, it assumed the form of a zeal for religious truth, or a passion to destroy every form of idolatry, and to bring mankind to the worship of one God. Supported by the energy which this passion inspired, and the contagious frenzy which it communicated, the Mahometan faith was conveyed from the Arabic Gulf to the banks of the Ganges and the Senegal, and to the remotest deserts of Tartary. At one time it seemed to embrace all Europe, invading Germany from the east, and advancing from the south through Spain into the centre of France, where its career was with difficulty arrested by Charles Martel, after a

sanguinary conflict of many days. The same passion has in Europe, at different periods, assumed the form of a zeal for freedom and of religious enthusiasm. It gave rise to those terrible crusades, which exhausted Europe of its population, for the purpose of rescuing the city of Jerusalem, and the sepulchre of Jesus Christ, from the possession of the followers of Mahomet. At the time when the barbarous laws of Europe required all accused persons, and even women, to appear in person, or by their champions, to defend their rights by single combat, high-spirited individuals, animated by this passion, traversed the world to redress grievances, and offer themselves on all occasions as the champions of the injured and the weak. Thereafter, when the Christian faith and clergy had become extremely corrupted, the same passion was very generally excited. In the sixteenth century, the progress of literature enabled mankind to discern the vices of their priesthood, which formed one of the principal orders of every European community. This class of men had been rendered voluptuous by riches, and indolent by long possession of power ; and the ignorance into which they had fallen, with the superstitions they encouraged, were at last beheld with contempt and indignation by a populace that were acquiring riches and knowledge. Princes and people, in many countries,

shared the same sentiment. Some reforms were attempted ; but the clergy having resisted such changes as the temper of mankind then rendered necessary, a zeal for their destruction was kindled, which rapidly diffused itself till it embraced the extremities of the Christian world. Men were, however, divided in their sentiments ; and many princes dreaded that the love of change might not stop short with the extirpation of one great order of the state. Destructive wars therefore took place, embittered by religious zeal ; in which one half of mankind struggled with the utmost ferocity to exterminate the other. This sanguinary rage, which divided not only states but private families, gradually subsided. Nations once more made war from views of policy, and religious quarrels were forgotten.

In our own times, after an interval of two centuries, the same passion, with a different object in view, once more kindled a flame among the nations ; all the consequences of which are not yet evolved. On this last occasion, that is, at the time of the French revolution, it assumed the form of a fervent zeal for the political amelioration of the state of mankind. The passion, however, was the same that had formerly induced the European states to engage in bloody wars for the support or the overthrow of their religious establishments.

In both cases, the followers of the new sect were filled with enthusiastic notions of their own powers and their own worth, with visionary schemes of impracticable improvement, with complete impatience of opposition, and with an eager zeal for making proselytes. On the last occasion in particular, the contagion of this passion rapidly flew, by sympathy, from city to city; and in a less or greater degree it extended to the utmost limits of Europe. One notion, which correctly explains the nature and origin of the passion, at that time chiefly filled the minds of men. This consisted of a misapplication of the principle, that no limit is fixed by Nature to the improvement of the human mind. Every reflecting and upright man knows this principle to be true with regard to himself; and under the administration of Divine Providence, human society is evidently advancing in a career of amelioration; but it by no means follows, that this great work can be divested, by human efforts, of its gradual and progressive character, and the human mind instantaneously exalted to the possession of supreme excellence: It does not follow, that, by a mere act of the will, a set of individuals can render themselves superior to all their own passions and ordinary weaknesses; or that, by force of argument, they can prevail with all mankind at once to do the same, and suddenly to rise to the utmost

heights of intellectual worth. At the period alluded to, however, the philosophical doctrine of the perfectibility of the human mind having for some time been contemplated with pleasure, men forgot that it was essentially of a gradual and progressive nature, and became impatient to see it realized. They soon began to flatter themselves, that, by the removal of a few obstacles, their wishes might be gratified ; and they at last fancied they could accomplish, in a few years or months, a work which Providence has reserved in its own hands, and ordained to be the business of ages. Men of letters, who had frequently indulged in such speculations ; benevolent persons, who wished well to the happiness of mankind, and who judged of others from the rectitude of their own intentions ; men of ardent imaginations, who believed every thing practicable to their unbounded zeal ; together with the young and inexperienced, who were unacquainted with the imperfections of the human character—all imagined that the period was arrived, when mankind, become rational and just, were no longer to engage in sanguinary wars of ambition ; when good sense alone was to rule the world ; and when the public business of society, reduced to the narrow limits of administering justice, and constructing high roads and harbours, might be conducted with little trouble, and without the

establishment of kings and nobles, and different ranks and orders of men, or the display of military force for the preservation of public tranquillity. The approbation of the common people gave to these ideas an appearance of practicability ; and thus a sort of general delirium was fostered, and men were led to believe that the greatest changes, not only in the order of society, but in the human character itself, might be accomplished with facility and safety.

These facts, which are historically true, not only illustrate the nature of the particular passion now under consideration, but demonstrate the correctness of the account I have hitherto given of all the other human passions. Such is the nature of the mind of man, that every pleasure we enjoy, and among others the pleasure of doing what we think right, and of opposing and destroying what we think irrational and unworthy, is apt, when at once cherished by hope and irritated by opposition, to fill the whole memory, and thereby to rise at last into a furious passion, which leads captive the whole powers of the mind, and urges forward to its own gratification with irresistible impetuosity, and with little hesitation about the means which it adopts.

This passion, like every other, is productive of much good, and is used in the administration of this world as a balance to our other passions.



Avarice, ambition, and other selfish affections, tend to exalt the power of individuals in the world to so great a degree, that the mere perception and approbation of what is right, would not be sufficient to induce mankind to resist, with sufficient energy, their undue influence, or to rectify the disorders they occasion. This weakness of character in man proves the cause of its own cure. From indolence and selfishness, each man, for a time, minds only himself, and is careless of the injuries suffered by others, till disorders accumulate to an alarming extent, and the moral order of the world is totally deranged. Thinking men, then, begin to reflect upon this state of things; and the more they reflect, the greater is their uneasiness, till at last the love of change becomes in their minds a deep-rooted passion, for the gratification of which they are willing to encounter every hazard. They explain their sentiments to the multitude, who are the chief sufferers by every general abuse, whose ignorance renders them credulous about the facility with which abuses may be remedied, and who are fearless of calamity, because they can lose nothing but life. The passion for setting matters right is propagated by sympathy, and gathers vehemence as it proceeds. In this manner have great changes in religion and policy been most frequently produced. Men have too little command over

their passions to be able to sacrifice their private prospects of pleasure, riches, or power, for the sake of opposing moderate evils; but when the evil becomes great, the disapprobation or dislike of it is apt gradually to grow into a passion. Then the same weakness which rendered them incapable of resisting their other passions, and of early and rationally preventing the growth of evil, now disables them from setting bounds to their hatred of its effects, and from hesitating about the measures which they adopt for its destruction. The ambitious, the covetous, the sensual, and the vindictive, are sometimes made to halt in their career by the sting of a disapproving mind: but he who has once suffered his thoughts to be completely occupied by the elevated and generous rage to destroy what he accounts a degrading superstition, or a disgraceful yoke of servitude, and has felt at his heart the hope of giving successful aid towards rendering mankind enlightened and free, can scarcely receive any check from within. His passion commenced with an exertion of the understanding. Its purposes are well meant; and the degree in which it at last fills the whole memory and thoughts, and the vehemence to which it gradually rises, prevent his perceiving that any means are extravagant or irrational which have the appearance of tending to promote its success. The more violent its efforts, or the greater his own

sufferings, the more unbounded does the triumph of his self-approbation become. The utter destruction of all opposers he regards as the extermination of evil; and in the ruin of his own affairs, and even in the sacrifice of his existence, he finds a crown of martyrdom. This passion, therefore, is the terrible instrument provided by Providence to rectify every great moral evil that may find its way into the world.

On the other hand, it is unnecessary to state in the present age, that this passion for reforming mankind is highly dangerous. By depriving the mind of its self-command, and rendering it blind to every consideration of consequences, it leads men to dishonour, by extravagant and sanguinary conduct, the cause which they wished to promote. They begin with the intention of ameliorating the moral character of man; but this passion renders them impatient of opposition, and hurries them on to the extermination of those whom at first they proposed to enlighten and improve. Hence those religious and political parties that were formed and united for the express purpose of extending toleration and freedom, have so frequently become, in their turn, the authors of persecution and slavery. The danger is rather increased than diminished by the circumstance, that the most intelligent, accomplished, and energetic minds, are most apt to be seized by this passion. It is even

apt to increase in retirement and amidst the pursuits of science; because temporary solitude and reflection are favourable to the strong discernment of what exalts and degrades our nature. But it is evident, that when such men are misled, the danger into which human society is brought must always be great, on account of the influence which they possess, or may acquire over the minds of others, and on account of the powerful nature of the resources which their ingenuity may call forth.

In times of public contention or alarm, when this passion is most apt to be excited, it is the duty of a virtuous man to recollect often, that human affairs are wisely and beneficently administered, but that they are so contrived, that their amelioration is slow and progressive, and that great good is never suddenly or violently accomplished. It is also his duty to render the passion we have now described unnecessary in his own mind, by acquiring that self-command which, on every occasion, may enable him to do his duty to society, without suffering himself either to be so much inflamed by opposition, or so much blinded by attachment to particular projects or notions, as to forget that force is not reason, that the edge of the sword introduces no light into the human mind, and that the certain and immediate commission of sanguinary actions can seldom be balanced by the doubtful prospect of future good.

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## CHAP. XVII.

### OF THE ACCESSORY PASSIONS.

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THESE are hope and fear, joy and grief. They are not properly passions in themselves, but rather the state of mind which accompanies other passions. They all consist of a certain degree of agitation or want of self-command; but this agitation is pleasing according to the degree of resolution or of energy of which the mind feels itself possessed at the time, and it is painful in proportion to the feebleness or want of vigour that attends it. Hence they have also received the appellation of *animating* and *depressing* passions.

Hope, when it exists in a remarkable degree, is that elated and energetic state of mind that attends the prospect of future good;—Fear is the depression and weakness that arises from the prospect of future evil;—Joy is the exaltation of mind attending upon great and unexpected success or good fortune;—and Grief is the feebleness of mind that attends upon disappointment or suffering. These

passions demonstrate, that pleasing perceptions augment, and that perceptions of irresistible evil diminish our voluntary power.

These passions are much employed by Nature as engines for exciting the activity of the human character. The greater number of men are continually occupied by them, and find in them their chief happiness and misery. In some respects, however, they are hostile to intellectual improvement. They withdraw our attention from the cultivation of excellence, and fix it upon the success or disappointment of our passions, or the events of life, which we cannot controul. The agitation and weakness of mind which they produce, is in direct opposition to that self-command which forms so great a part of the perfection of our nature. Accordingly, the pursuit and acquisition of an enlightened and vigorous mind, have a tendency to produce the gradual extinction of that agitation, intemperateness, and confusion of mind, which forms the essence of these passions. With a wise man, the great business of life, to which ordinary occupations are viewed as subservient, consists of the pursuit of intellectual excellence; but such a man will not readily rise into any intemperate degree of joy on account of the progress in this pursuit that has been made by himself, or by those in whom he is peculiarly interested. A small degree of attention will point out enough

of error and weakness yet remaining to render his triumph very moderate. When he reflects upon what is yet to be done, and that a journey of infinite length towards perfection still lies before him, he will find his attainments too small to justify great exultation. If his joy arise from any thing else than the acquisition of excellence, it is no better than folly. It is a proof that he is engrossed by the love of something that is not truly valuable. It is therefore a weakness, which farther progress in intelligence will instruct him to avoid.

A man who seeks only the perfection of his nature will not readily be much agitated, even by the hope of future good. To-morrow can bring him nothing that he may not possess to-day. To-morrow may bring him an opportunity of labouring in the improvement of his intellectual character; but this opportunity he enjoys during the present moment. The present time is his, therefore, and he has no reason to be troubled about futurity. The improvement of his rational nature is now in his own power; and it would not be wisdom, but absurdity, for him to be anxious about events which he cannot controul, and which are already arranged by a Being of whose skill he possesses sufficient proofs to inspire him with confidence that all will be well managed. Persons who seek the gratification of their passions will no doubt look

forward with much eagerness to the success of their wishes, and their hopes will be proportioned to the vehemence of the passion they indulge : But a man who makes the improvement of his rational faculties his only employment, ought to be too busy with the present to allow his fancy to wander idly forward in quest of pleasure. The works of nature are so unlimited, and present so much science to be acquired ; the duties of life are so numerous, and afford so much to be done ; the labour in which he is engaged is so endless, and at the same time so elevated in its nature ; —that he has no occasion and no leisure to indulge the pleasure of expectation, which is usually the resource of idle and vacant minds. If he reflect upon the past, therefore, it will be to derive from it maxims of wisdom ; if he look to the future, it will be to prepare for the duties in which it may engage him. He pursues not felicity ; he will not therefore employ his imagination in framing vain dreams of joy that are never to be realised. He aims at becoming an excellent being ; but he knows that this attainment must be the result of application and caution, and much well-directed labour ; and that, after all, the acquisition of it must be gradual, and never entire or complete. But such a pursuit, and such a train of conduct, are obviously inconsistent with violent or tumultuous emotions of hope and joy.



The depressing passions of fear and grief derive much of their power over the mind from a want of steady principles, or from not forming a clear and fixed estimate of the purpose for which we were sent into this world, and of what is or is not worthy of being pursued by us in it. The value of virtue, or of intellectual worth, is never denied ; but few men regard the acquisition of it as the business of their lives, and themselves as throwing uselessly away their time and their talents when employed about any thing else. While they confess its value, they account other objects valuable also. We wish to reconcile contradictions, by pursuing at once both wisdom and folly, by indulging our passions, and acquiring self-command at the same time. Hence we often talk of our own prosperity, and of the prosperity of our native country, as connected, not with the progress of reason, but with the acquisition of lands and goods. It is seldom recollected that we and our country exist in vain, excepting so far as we advance in moral excellence. We talk of the importance of virtue, and, at the same time, both our fathers and we have talked of our country's interests in distant regions, as promoted by conquests and treachery and murder ; that is to say, we allow that moral worth is a good thing, while, at the same time, we consider ourselves as deriving advantage from something, not only different from

intellectual improvement, but even altogether hostile to its progress, and inconsistent with its existence.

It is not wonderful that this contradictory and inaccurate mode of thinking should infect our conduct. We have no single object of pursuit, but alter our schemes, as avarice, ambition, pleasure, or conscience, chance to be uppermost. We perform religious ceremonies from habit, or a superstitious reverence for we know not what. We indulge our passions, because it pleases us for the instant to do so, or because others do the same. We pursue the objects of these passions with anxiety, and are thrown into grief and despair by disappointment with regard to them. We do kind actions, because we are of a soft temper, or are met with in a good humour; and we act harshly when the contrary is the case. We pursue riches, because the world admires them; and we think ourselves and our families ruined by the loss of them, because fools have said that we are so. Thus we stagger on at random, without principle, through life. At the end of it, we know not whether we have been wise or foolish, and begin to wonder what is to become of us hereafter. The terrors of superstition lay hold of us. Some lay these asleep by levity, and others by vain prayers and repentance: till at last, between hope and despair,

we find ourselves compelled to close our eyes and to take a leap into the dark.

This total want of all consistency of character, which renders the human race the sport of so many contradictory passions, and leads them so often to bewail the vanity and the misery of their existence, can never occur to him who discerns clearly what is truly worthy of pursuit, and what ought to be the business of a rational being. He knows that nothing else is worthy of occupying his attention, but to labour to acquire ability, integrity, and self-command. The only dangers in his way are ignorance, error, and weakness. If he has been able, in a considerable degree, to surmount these, he has accomplished his business in life, and has met with no calamity. The occurrences which other men call unfortunate, are the happy seasons in which his mind is tried, and rendered vigorous; and which afford him an opportunity of knowing the degree of integrity and steadfastness which he has acquired. They are recollected with satisfaction, as convincing memorials that he himself does actually possess a portion of that self-command, and wisdom, and excellence of nature, of which he approves in speculation. Every hardship well endured, every just purpose, or enlightened pursuit, steadily adhered to, every branch of knowledge acquired, are lasting monuments that he is what he would wish

to become, a virtuous being, gradually rising towards perfection, and worthy of the approbation of every discerning and excellent mind. Not to have acquired great wealth, can be no true disappointment ; for even if it belonged to him, he would not think it a valuable possession. If some men have attained to more power, he never regarded the pursuit of power as worthy of engrossing his thoughts and becoming his principal employment. When, therefore, the covetous, the ambitious, or the vain, succeed in their projects, they do not on that account excite his envy or regret ; for he too has succeeded in his scheme : and if they have obtained their reward, he has obtained his also. He fulfilled vigorously the duties of his station ; not because he wished to become rich or distinguished in the world, but that he might acquire a valuable mind, and perform a part of the business of society. If his particular plans have been unsuccessful by the injustice of men, or by the irresistible course of Providence, that is no affair of his, and no misfortune to him. It was not success in projects of a mercantile or political nature that he accounted the business of his life ; but to become skilful, and active, and temperate, and just, by the steady exertion of his talents, and the performance of such duties as came within his reach : this he has done,

call him unfortunate, but it is because they comprehend not the sublime career of wisdom in which he is engaged ; or the elevation of his character, which must render him, in the eyes of superior natures, if any such look down upon the affairs of this world, as a man pursuing a serious employment amidst children who are chasing after follies and trifles. Those falsely called his equals will often be idly running in his way, and will jostle him in his progress ; but his clear discernment of what is good and excellent will prevent them from disturbing much the peace of his mind ; and his knowledge of their nature will enable him to take little offence at their conduct.

Even the loss of those whom he loved will be better endured by a man who pursues intellectual improvement than by others, and will produce a less excessive degree of the depressing passions. He knows the condition of change upon which every human connection is formed, and is not therefore surprised when it takes place. He is accustomed to consider what is to be done and what is to be learned upon every occurrence, and not to stand still, and vainly regret what cannot be opposed. He sees so much skill exerted in the contrivance and management of this world, that he respects, when he does not entirely comprehend, the conduct of Providence. He knows that it is not life that

is valuable, but wisdom ; that it is not death, but weakness and folly, that are evil. The memory of the excellent and the good is a sentiment that is always more pleasing than painful, as it brings the recollection of what is lovely and perfect. He who is engaged in the pursuit of virtue has always lived long enough ; whereas they who are occupied by folly had as well never have lived at all. If we have loved only the wise then, we have no just cause of regret. They have finished their labours well, or they have only changed the scene of their exertions. If we have loved those who deserved not our regard, a temptation to folly is removed from us ; and, in either case, an opportunity is presented of acting with propriety, by acquiescing in the purposes of Providence.

It is true, that it is not always easy thus to overcome the weakness of our nature, to remain steadfast, persevering, and calm, amidst the disappointing and cruel occurrences of life ; and to regard the acquisition of moral worth, and the diffusion of it in the world, as our sole employment, and every thing else as of no value. But this is because perfection of mind is not the work of a day ; and to judge and to act with wisdom and firmness on all occasions, must be the result of many efforts, and of long perseverance. It is not complete superiority to passion, but an approach towards it, that is expected

of man. In proportion to the degree of wisdom and of self-command that he attains, his superiority to all agitation and weakness will be more complete. And much, in this respect, may surely be done. Vanity, avarice, love, ambition, and every passion, have induced men and women to brave death, and to encounter innumerable hardships. In ancient Sparta, when the news of the loss of a battle arrived, they whose relations had fallen in the field appeared in public crowned with flowers, and accompanied by every mark of festivity and joy ; but they whose relations had fled, and were safe, concealed themselves and put on mourning, on account of the dishonour done to their family and country. But if ordinary and vulgar passions can confer unbounded courage ; or if the institutions of Lycurgus could overcome the weakness of nature,—there can be no reason why the desire of attaining to intellectual excellence should not produce similar and higher effects in an enlightened mind.

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## CHAP. XVIII.

### OF HABIT.

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UPON the principles already stated, every aspect which the human mind assumes may be explained, and our duty known with regard to it. The influence of habit upon the opinions and feelings of men will afford an example of this.

Habit or custom produces three remarkable effects. It enables us to perform a work of art with greater ease than formerly; it alters our feelings with regard to objects or exertions, by rendering that pleasing which was originally painful; and, lastly, it influences our opinion of what is right and wrong, rational and irrational.

1st. Habit, so far as it enables us to accomplish any well understood purpose with greater facility than formerly, is an affection of the memory or train of ideas. In consequence of frequently repeating an operation, each succeeding step of it is more strictly associated with that which goes before it, and spontaneously presents itself



to the mind without requiring a new effort of recollection as at first.

2d. The repetition of an exertion, or the frequent presence of a disagreeable object, is gradually productive of ease or indifference; because the pleasure or uneasiness that attends our perceptions or efforts is always diminished by being repeatedly felt. Things once disagreeable, such as the taste of tobacco, or the study of languages, often become even positively pleasing by habit; because the pain they once occasioned gradually departs, while the pleasure arising from activity remains, and renders them in some degree acceptable, and even sometimes ultimately objects of passionate desire.

3d. Habit, under the name of fashion, influences our opinion of what is morally right, by so diminishing the uneasiness with which we regard improper conduct when it is continually in our view, that at last we begin to account it a thing of course, and a part of the order of Nature. In this way the most absurd laws, religions, and practices come to be regarded with indifference and even with pleasure.

The same effect is sometimes produced by associating bad actions in the memory with the persons who committed them, and the situations which they occupy in society. Ordinary minds admire and regard with pleasure the powerful and the rich. This pleasure balances and overcomes the sentiment of disgust with which

they would otherwise regard their improper actions. Hence the vices of the great are regarded with less detestation than the vices of men who occupy lower stations in life. Thus adultery, though perhaps, without exception, the most pernicious crime that can occur in society, is less severely hated or punished by modern nations than to steal a chicken or to rob an orchard. Gallantry is the vice of the rich and the powerful, whereas petty thefts are committed by the poor. Thus, also, it is less disgraceful to plunder a province, and to murder half a million of men, than to violate our neighbour's property to the value of a shilling.

One good effect arising from the power of habit is the authority which it confers upon general rules. A man who has suffered from poverty, naturally tries to remedy the inconveniences of his situation. In doing so, he acquires habits of economy and industry, which do not forsake him even when they cease to be necessary. He teaches the same conduct to his children; who also learn to pursue it from habit, without much discernment of its propriety or wisdom. Thus men, on a thousand occasions, do what they see their neighbours do, and what they themselves have been accustomed to do, without once thinking of the reasonableness of their conduct. Many an honest man accounts falsehood a very bad thing, who would be very much puzzled to tell

why a man is bound to keep his word. In such cases, it is purely from habit that we respect the general rule, without recollecting, and often without comprehending the principle upon which it is founded. These general rules are to a great part of mankind instead of an enlightened mind. To steal is a counted a crime; and persons would startle at the idea of being guilty of it, who understand not the principles upon which the claim of exclusive property is founded. All men have enough of memory to remember a precept, or to learn to act habitually, and as if mechanically, upon it; but few men are capable, at all times, of discerning the reasons which ought to regulate their conduct, and of acting in consequence of them. By the force of habit, human society is thus made to possess a considerable degree of stability; and ignorant or unthinking men are made to perform the same actions that they would have performed, had they possessed far higher wisdom.

The power of habit, however, almost always implies imbecility of mind. Its influence arises from the weakness or inactivity of the voluntary power of the understanding, which enables the memory and its associations to rule the mind. So far, at least, as the force of habit tends to obscure the discernment of good and evil, or the difference betwixt what is rational and what is degrading and unwise, it ought to be resisted.

The mind ought, at all times, to preserve itself awake and alive to the perception of truth. It ought to elevate itself above local practices and prejudices, and to regard man as he is by nature, and as he ought to become. It ought to judge of actions from their tendency to produce true excellence or defect, and not from the notions that men in particular ages or situations have formed of them. But it is difficult for a man who is continually immersed in the hurry of ordinary affairs, to avoid acquiring the ideas that pass current among those with whom he associates. Hence he ought, at times, to retire for a short period from the embarrassment of society, and to converse with Nature. He ought to consider anew the general plan upon which this world is conducted, the design for which it was contrived, and the means by which that design is accomplished. Thus his conversation, not being always with man, but sometimes also with the skilful Contriver of the universe, he will be prevented from contracting narrow habits and prejudices; and while he acquires vigour and ingenuity by performing a part of the ordinary business of life, his mind will be enabled to retain alive its discernment of the general purposes of its existence, and what ought to be the great object of its pursuit.

Even general rules ought, as far as possible, to be laid aside; and we ought to endeavour to act,

not from the rule, but from the reason of the rule. Thus it is a rule, that a prisoner of war ought not to break his parole, or the promise made by him not to run away, or not to serve till he is exchanged. This promise ought to be strictly obeyed; not merely because it is the practice to do so, or infamous to do otherwise, but because a contrary conduct would tend to injure the growing spirit of humanity and mutual confidence, which, in modern Europe, has divested war of many of its evils. While a man thus takes care, on every occasion, to consider the ultimate tendency of his actions, his understanding will be preserved in an acute and vigorous state, and in every part of his existence he will be a rational and enlightened being.

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## CHAP. XIX.

### REVIEW OF THE VALUE OF THE PASSIONS.

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To understand correctly the moral value of the human passions, has always appeared to me a point of very considerable difficulty. Our pas-

sions grow up necessarily in our constitution in consequence of the situation in which we are placed. They are productive of much intellectual improvement; but they are also productive of the worst evils that exist in the world. Hence their value is, at all times, apt to assume a most ambiguous aspect. In addition, therefore, to what has been already stated upon each of the passions separately, I shall here make some remarks concerning their nature and tendency.

By the passions, as already explained, it will be observed, that I mean attachments and aversions, which have fixed themselves in the memory in such a degree as to resist, or to influence strongly, the voluntary power of the mind, and thereby to prevent the free and complete exercise of the perceptive faculty or understanding, either in distinguishing between truth and falsehood, or between excellence and imperfection in ourselves and others.

The human character attains to intellectual improvement in two ways: *first*, by being indirectly led by Nature to such a train of conduct as is productive of that improvement; and, *secondly*, by the direct and voluntary pursuit of it in consequence of discerning its value. It is evident, that this last mode of attaining to improvement can only occur in those minds which have previously, under the guidance of Nature, attained to no small degree of discernment; because originally,

or at his birth, it is impossible for any man to have a knowledge of its importance. If the arranging power, therefore, who contrived this world, intended the human mind to attain to much excellence, it was necessary that its structure and situation should be so devised as that it should involuntarily, and without much foresight, attain, in the first instance, to such a degree of intelligence and perfection of character, as might enable it to perceive the value of intellectual worth, and the importance of pursuing it, in preference to all other objects.

With this view, therefore, the mind of man appears to have been furnished with organs of memory and of sense, and himself placed in a situation which should give rise to appetites, affections, and passions. When only contriving to gratify these, we perform the important office of preserving the human race, and we produce what is of more value, their intellectual improvement. In providing food and cloathing, we are laid under the necessity of exerting much ingenuity and perseverance. A renowned hunter in a savage tribe is far from being a mean character. He possesses much patience and courage and art; qualities which in his situation may be regarded as produced by the hunger and cold which he suffers, and which compel him to make war upon the wild inhabitants of the forest. When that resource is insufficient for sub-

sistence, the invention is stretched to discover other ways to supply the wants of Nature ; and we know the variety of arts to which necessity in this manner gives rise. Competitions for the same objects must often occur amongst those who have wants to supply. These produce encroachments of men upon each other ; to repel which, the boldest efforts of ability and courage are often necessary. Hence arise angry passions, which, by perpetuating contests, increase the activity and vigilance of all parties. If an individual have many cares, the benevolent affections render them still more numerous. By means of these affections, he has not only himself to provide for, but also his family. He has not only his own quarrels to maintain, but those of his friends and of his country. Besides this, he has other business to attend to ; he is covetous, he is vain, he is ambitious. It is not enough that immediate wants are supplied ; he must hoard up for futurity ; he must be distinguished, he must be powerful. His desires are endless ; his cares keep pace with them ; his exertions in every direction are redoubled, and with them the energy and ability of his character are increased. His avarice leads him to study the useful arts ; his love of praise induces him to learn the arts which please mankind ; and by ambition, he is taught to investigate the human character, and to acquire those accomplishments which



conduct to superiority and command. By the agitation resulting from so many wants and passions, the world becomes a busy scene. Some cultivate the soil, some seek distinction and wealth in crowds, and rear up cities and palaces. The ocean is covered with ships, bearing covetous and enterprizing men. The passions of nations interfere like those of individuals. Great armies are collected; and the highest exertions of human intrepidity and art are employed to cover the earth with desolation and mourning.

Amidst all these efforts man becomes a distinguished and skilful being. But thus far it may be said that Nature does all for him. He follows the feelings which are either implanted in his mind, or which spring up in it in consequence of his situation. The plan upon which he acts is not of his own contrivance; he is conscious of pursuing merely the gratification of his own wishes; and in the meantime, he is indirectly led by the Author of this world, and of his constitution, to the acquisition of much dexterity and vigour of character. He even becomes a moral agent, that is, he acts upon a plan and general rules. He discerns the value of an improved understanding as a powerful instrument whereby to render his passions successful in their efforts. He restrains his present inclinations when they come into competition with the interests which he more steadily and permanently values; and

## OF THE PASSIONS.

he learns to call that conduct right and good which he thinks tends ultimately to produce the most extensive felicity to himself and his country, or those whose welfare has become dear to him. All this, however, is only the result of the mingled exertion of the selfish and benevolent affections, with a portion of reason balancing them tolerably against each other.

In this state of things the human mind is very valuable on account of the degree of intelligence to which it attains. The human mind, however, is capable of making boundless progress in improvement; but it is a certain, and perhaps the most important truth in moral science, that there is a certain stage of intellectual improvement, beyond which the passions cannot carry the human mind; or, in other words, that to enable man to make boundless progress in intellectual worth, there is a period of his history at which he must cast off the dominion of his passions, and act from a more permanent principle suited to his progressive character.

Two causes disqualify the passions for becoming a source of boundless improvement to the human mind. First, from their own nature they gradually cease to be adequate to the task; and, secondly, they never fail, at a certain stage of the history of mankind, to lose their beneficial influence; because men become weary of acting in obedience to them, and voluntarily cast

off the dominion of such of them as are most valuable.

1st. The permanent supremacy or dominion of any one passion is evidently inconsistent with great intellectual improvement. It absorbs the attention to its own objects, subdues the will, and equally disqualifies the mind for the study of general truth and for rational conduct. Human society even finds it necessary to attempt, by laws and punishments, to restrain the ardour of the passions of men, on account of their tendency to produce endless disorders. In proportion as the art of government improves, this object is accordingly accomplished: and hence the establishment of a very strict police, and of a vigilant administration, over a civilized people, for repressing every disorderly sally of the human passions, have been represented, with some truth, by ingenious writers, as circumstances which usually precede and lead to the stoppage of the progress of a nation in an ardent and improving career; because these circumstances tend to extinguish the passions from which human enterprise and activity originate.

2d. But, independent of all such considerations, it is an important fact in the history of man, that there is a stage in his progress at which he voluntarily casts off the dominion of the more energetic and ardent passions, which have the highest tendency to improve his intel-

lectual powers. This necessarily occurs in the following manner.

All human passions have the same object in view, though under a diversity of forms, that is to say, the love of pleasure. In obeying his passions, a man is employed in the pursuit of happiness, which he expects to find in their gratification. But in this expectation he is sure to be disappointed; because it is a law of his constitution, that every pleasure diminishes by repeated enjoyment.

After some experience, therefore, men infallibly begin to complain that their passions are deceitful; that there is more toil in the pursuit than joy in the possession of their objects. Some try various passions, others confine themselves to one; but all at last confess that the attempt to obtain felicity by their gratification is fruitless. A kind of hue and cry is raised against this world and the human frame and the destiny of man; and it is said that he was born to sorrow and to disappointment. His very existence is complained of as an evil, seeing it leads him to pursue phantoms of unreal pleasure; the failure to obtain which produces real vexation, and of which the actual possession bestows no felicity. Pretended teachers of moral wisdom rise up to instruct the world. They tell men that they have pursued felicity by a wrong path; that they have sought it in

avarice, in vanity, in ambition, and other selfish passions ; whereas they ought to seek it in the exercise of the benevolent affections, which are now dignified with the name of *virtue*. But these affections are soon found to lead to as much disappointment and anxiety as any of our other passions. They are baffled in their efforts by the unworthiness of their objects, by the crimes of men, or by the powerful hand of fate. After many vain struggles to find happiness in benevolence, or in attempting to confer felicity upon mankind, and after encountering only hostility, ingratitude, and mortification for their reward, the most generous and accomplished individuals are at last compelled to declare, that virtue itself (if virtue be the only road to happiness, and benevolence the only virtue) is so far from being a real good, that at best it is an empty name. This renders matters worse. It is said that this world is a scene of confusion, in which virtue meets with no reward, and vice with no punishment ; and that it cannot possibly be governed by Supreme Intelligence. Here devout speculators in religion interfere, and take advantage of human weakness. They acknowledge that the Ruler of all things has hitherto left this world very much to itself, but that hereafter he will make amends by punishing very dreadfully the wicked ; that all men are wicked in

some degree ; and that he is a very terrible being, who will pardon no human weakness excepting to those who mortify themselves deeply before him, and purchase in their favour the intercession of his priests. This folly next passes current ; and thus it happens that in the old age of nations, as in that of individuals, after the bolder and more ardent passions have been deserted, superstition obtains dominion over the mind. If it have any rival, it consists merely of the diags of the other passions ; of avarice, not in the form of speculative enterprise, but of hoarding and penury ; of ambition, not demanding notice by daring and honourable conduct, but creeping upwards to power by obsequious servility ; or of the love of pleasure, not displayed in active occupations, but in a contemptible sensuality.

This is not a speculative or merely imaginary description of the natural progress of the human passions ; every part of it is verified by the actual history of mankind.

In the earlier periods of the history of nations, we find that men, full of ardour and of hope, are led by their passions to exert themselves, and seek felicity in every direction : But when communities have long been agitated by the ardour of public and private ambition ; when the members of the state, animated by an ardent patriotism, or thirst for the ag-

grandisement of their country, have inflicted every calamity upon neighbouring communities, and have encountered the same evils in return—the wise among them at length stand still, and ask, why so much has been done and suffered? They perceive, that as the boundless ambition of an individual is enmity to his country, so the ambition of a particular state, and the patriotism of its citizens, must be enmity to the human race. It is easily discerned, that if happiness be the proper object of human pursuit, it can be attained to as great a degree in the obscurity of voluptuous indolence as in the hurry and toil of public or private ambition. Thus the wisest men in a community never fail to be the first who retire from the career of activity and labour, which is the only sure mode of attaining to excellence. The retirement from public business, of such men as Lucullus and Atticus, afforded a sure presage that the Roman republic had nearly terminated its splendid efforts. The prudence of men like these was gradually imitated; a general languour and indifference spread over the face of society; public affairs were neglected and mismanaged; abuses multiplied; a tranquil and voluptuous life was courted as the greatest good; a people, whose high-spirited ancestors no difficulties could intimidate or misfortunes subdue, become lovers of ease, submitted to a

succession of military usurpers, and gradually sunk into ignorance and weakness. It was in vain that a pure religion was presented to them. The declining character of the age imparted itself to every thing, and corrupted the religion by which it ought to have been reformed.

The degenerate Romans converted the religion of Jesus Christ into an enfeebling superstition, which substituted pilgrimages, confessions, masses, mortification, and credulity in the perpetual agency of saints and devils, to that patriotic ambition which, in better times, had rendered their predecessors the masters of every neighbouring state.

The Portuguese and the Spaniards, in modern Europe, afford a similar example of the manner in which the ardent passions subside, and leave a people far more weak and worthless than at the commencement of their career. The conquerors of Mexico, and the first navigators to ancient India, were animated by the passion of avarice in its most enterprising form. The efforts of their perseverance and courage were not surpassed by those of Greece and Rome in their best days: But the passion under which those modern adventurers acted, speedily sunk into a blind and selfish love of separate accumulation, which exhausted their public spirit, and led them to neglect literature and the valuable arts, by which the rest of Europe was



more gradually becoming distinguished. The chains of superstition were suffered to augment their weight; and these nations now exist as a beacon to warn mankind, that though the pursuit of riches may for a while aggrandize a people, yet if they find no better motive to exertion, they must rapidly sink into unworthiness and imbecility.

Even the pursuit of knowledge itself, when engaged in as a passion, and upon the same principle from which the other passions are obeyed, that is, for the sake of the happiness expected to be derived from it, is apt at last to become disgusting by the disappointment which attends it. Men of science are provoked to find that the ignorant are as happy as themselves, and usually more contented with their condition.

Thus by obeying their passions, that is, by pursuing pleasure or enjoyment as their chief good, men, no doubt, unintentionally acquire a considerable degree of improvement; but they do also most certainly arrive at a period at which they discern the folly of encountering labour and hardships as the means of happiness; and consequently they reach a point at which they relinquish their activity, and along with it their progress in intelligence. In this manner has human society hitherto proceeded. It has been in a state of continual progress and

decline. Man has been led by his passions to the acquisition of much excellence; and, on becoming wise enough to discover the vanity of obeying the impulse of these passions, he has necessarily sunk, from the want of a new motive of action, into indolence and ignorance.

This great calamity, which has repeatedly befallen nations, arose entirely from a speculative error in moral science.

It is true, that men cannot act without having some object in view; but it does by no means follow, that if they pursue not the gratification of their passions, they can have no other object of pursuit. If the account formerly given of the understanding, or intellectual constitution of man, was rightly understood, it will readily occur that the human mind, according to the extent of its observation, is capable of appreciating justly an improved intellectual character, and values highly every demonstration of its exertion. It is the pursuit of this improvement of character, by a free, a self-commanding and enlightened understanding, as distinguished from the pursuit of the objects of passion, by a mind led captive by the illusions of memory, that forms the perfection of moral conduct in man. This is an occupation which can never come to a termination, and which will be more highly valued the longer it is pursued. In former ages, however, before the tendency of the various

principles of action in our nature had been sufficiently unfolded, men, thinking and acting under the influence of their passions, imagined that their only business was to enjoy the happiness towards which these passions directed their attention, and that consequently this world was only formed to be subservient to their felicity; but when they discovered that their passions were deceitful, and afforded not the felicity which they promised, it is not wonderful that they sat down in despair, and suffered their activity to relax: whereas their views of life and of human affairs would have been very different, had they discerned the plan upon which Nature actually proceeds with regard to the human race. Our passions are given, not to produce felicity, but to stimulate us to exertion during the infancy of the understanding, that is, till we ourselves can discern the value of intellectual improvement, and become capable of pursuing it directly and voluntarily. In this way, first by the indirect influence of the human passions, and thereafter by our own direct and intentional efforts, Providence designs ultimately to produce a race of beings, whose minds, by continued exertion, shall gradually rise to unlimited degrees of excellence. As, upon one view of the case, men laid aside their activity, because it was unnecessary or ineffectual to the production of happiness; so, upon a different view of their situation,

they would have discerned the propriety of continuing to exert the whole energies of their nature, as the only means of accomplishing successfully the great and valuable object of their existence.' It is, therefore, important at all times, but it is greatly so at the present stage of the history of nations, that the human character, and the business of man in this world, should be well understood. Ambition, avarice, and our various passions, have gradually called forth much ingenuity, and familiarized the civilized world to splendid exertions of courage and skill; but farther excellence than that to which they have already given birth, these passions are not calculated to produce. At the present period, therefore, it is probable that, like the ancient nations, the more ardent passions of public and private ambition being less exerted, our progress would stop, if more extensive and valuable objects of pursuit were not set before us. This is more likely to occur, in consequence of the late attempt so violently made in the centre of Europe, suddenly to ameliorate the political condition of mankind by a vehement and impassioned effort, instead of following out the gradual career of improvement, in which alone the human mind is capable of proceeding.' The ill success of such an effort is apt to confer too powerful charms upon a life of indolence and a tranquil state of society. It is apt to produce a

kind of despair with regard to the human character and its future prospects; and this more especially in those ardent minds which, when well directed, form *the salt of the earth*; because, by their restless energy, they are best qualified to make distinguished improvements in all those arts to which the human mind owes its dominion over the material world, or is enabled to press forward in the paths of general science.

In this state of affairs, two principles cannot be too strongly enforced, or too frequently brought into view: *First*, That the whole structure of our constitution, and of the world in which we are placed, demonstrates that the improvement of the human mind is the great business of man, and the purpose of his existence; and, *Secondly*, That this improvement, consisting as it does of growing intelligence and superiority to every passion and every weakness, is necessarily of a progressive nature, and only to be accomplished in such a gradual manner, as enables each of the generations of men in succession to find sufficient occupation in advancing a moderate stage beyond that which preceded it, leaving to those that come after to build upon a foundation that has previously been laid. Thus we labour, not merely for ourselves, but for future ages. The progress in which we are engaged is the result of the skilful arrangements of Providence; and can no more be baffled by

the errors of a particular generation than by the follies of an individual. These errors were necessary to the instruction of succeeding times. They illustrate the character of man, and the tendency of all his passions; and had they not occurred, the mass of moral wisdom that exists in the world would have been less than it now is. The safety of a better age might also have been compromised, or brought into hazard; because a lesson of experience appears to have been requisite to afford a practical demonstration of the principle, that there is no shorter road to the general improvement of the human character than that which Nature indicates, and which is the result of the labour of successive ages gradually rising above each other.

It has been thought a curious question, Whether the whole of the present states of Europe are destined to sink back, as former nations have done, into ignorance, superstition, and weakness, from which they can only be revived by foreign conquest, or great convulsions, and a slow revival of arts and letters? In particular, it has been asked, Is Britain to sink, as Rome sunk, by its Asiatic conquests? Or is the wealth of the Indies destined to subdue the spirit of our people as it did that of the Portuguese, the Spaniards, and the Dutch; and is the poetic prophecy to be fulfilled?—

Time may come, when, stript of all her charms,  
That land of scholars, and that nurse of arms,  
Where noble stems transmit the patriot claim,  
And monarchs toil, and poets pant for fame,  
One sink of level avarice shall lie,  
And scholars, soldiers, kings, unhonoured die.

GOLDSMITH

Any opinion that might be delivered upon such a question belongs to a future part of this Work, or to the consideration of the social duties of man. In the mean while, it may be remarked, that its solution depends upon another question, Whether a sufficient number of individuals have as yet attained to enough of moral wisdom, to induce them to engage in a career of direct personal improvement, or have, as it were, taken themselves out of the hands of nature, that is, out of the government of their passions, and have engaged in the peculiar pursuit which can neither produce disappointment, nor come to a close, that of an active, a steadfast, and enlightened mind, which prejudice cannot mislead in speculation, nor passion seduce, inflame, or intimidate, in the conduct of affairs?

It fortunately happens that the doctrines which have been stated in this Treatise are not new. The important occupation of self-improvement has been repeatedly recognized by individuals as the most valuable employment of man. This is not wonderful; for, so far as pleasure is con-

cerned, one sort of activity is nearly as agreeable as another; and the pursuit of an enlarged and improving mind is readily recognized by the human understanding as the most dignified of all employments. Upon the existence of persons engaging in it in sufficient numbers to enable them to influence the character, opinions, and pursuits of society, the future destiny of nations depends. In ancient Rome, accomplished and virtuous men, who considered power and fame and riches as pursuits subordinate to intellectual excellence, were so few, that when half a dozen individuals were cut off, the nation was lost. The extensive diffusion of knowledge has with us greatly altered the character and state of society. But as I am here discussing the duty of individuals towards themselves, or the subject of self-improvement, I shall only remark, that they who have engaged in it as the great business of life, to which other pursuits are accounted and rendered subordinate, may well reflect with pride and satisfaction, that upon them rest the hope of future ages and the stability of their country. It may be difficult to say how many righteous persons will, in this stage of the history of the world, be necessary to save a guilty city; but it is certain, that the nation in which men honestly and truly engaged in the pursuit of intellectual improvement shall first abound, will become permanent upon



the earth. Being engaged in an improving instead of a fluctuating career, it will at all times contain multitudes of active and enlightened men, capable of seizing every advantage that may occur in human affairs. It will therefore steadily increase, while other nations decline and pass away; and its race, constantly augmenting in numbers and intelligence, will ultimately be the masters of the globe.

In the mean while, it appears impossible to avoid admiring the skilful manner in which the moral education of the human mind is contrived, and particularly the way in which the passions are rendered subservient to our intellectual progress, previous to the period at which we acquire sufficient discernment to enable us to pursue directly, and from our own choice, the object on account of which we received existence. Every one of the passions leads us to perform some duty, or to do the very same actions which an enlightened understanding would have led us to perform had we been possessed of it. A complete knowledge of what is excellent, and worthy of pursuit, would induce us to preserve ourselves, and to propagate our species, that intelligent beings may abound, and that reason and virtue may be cultivated on the earth. The same knowledge would have led wiser beings to repel and to disarm unjust violence, to exert their talents in the cultivation of every art, to accu-

mulate the means of subsistence, to bind together society by a reciprocity of good offices, and to seek distinction and eminence, that they may be employed for wise purposes. But hunger and thirst, lust, avarice, ambition, vanity, and self-love, induce us to pursue the same objects. The consequence is, that when the human mind becomes improved, and we discern our true situation and business in this world, we find that we have been performing the very same actions that we would have wished to perform had we possessed the highest conceivable degree of knowledge and self-command. Thus are we trained up in the way wherein we should go ; and thus, when we acquire extensive views of truth and excellence, we are under no necessity of changing our conduct. We continue to perform the same actions, but with different motives and purposes ; reason, or the desire of perfection, being now become the motive, as blind inclination or passion was formerly.

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## CHAP. XX.

### A SPECULATIVE AND ACTIVE LIFE COMPARED.

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BEFORE concluding this Part, I shall concisely notice the important practical question, Whether the human mind is most highly improved by speculation or by business ; that is, by a life spent in the pursuits of science, or by engaging in a career of ordinary industry ?

I shall begin by stating the advantages and disadvantages which, in a moral point of view, seem to attend upon each of these modes of life; after which it will not be difficult to resolve the general question relative to their comparative utility.

The pursuit of knowledge, when rationally conducted, consists of the careful investigation and examination of the various objects which Nature has produced, and of attempting to reduce them and their qualities under general heads, which constitute what are called *the principles of science*, by means of which the recollection is facilitated of all the particulars that

have been observed or discovered. In some branches of physical science, this investigation and classification of the works of Nature is a laborious task. The botanist and the mineralogist, in the pursuit of their different departments, find it necessary to survey, as far as possible, every part of the surface and of the substance of the globe which we inhabit. The chemist must, on the other hand, bring together all sorts of bodies, and all their combinations, and examine with patient and persevering industry their effects upon each other, and all their repulsions and combinations under different degrees of temperature. The result of all his observations must also be arranged, if possible, in such a form as to exhibit the principles according to which Nature conducts her minute operations.

The study of moral science consists in examining, by personal observation, and by the aid of history, the qualities of the human mind, and the various circumstances by which these qualities are affected ; whether they consist of the physical situation in which a people are placed, as the fertility of their soil, and its vicinity to the ocean, or of their education, or their religious and social institutions. The result of this investigation is to be reduced, in like manner, by arrangement, into general principles, which state shortly the different circumstances which tend to ameliorate or injure the condition or the

character of man. The advantages resulting from such pursuits to the individuals engaged in them, are obviously great.

The pursuit of knowledge is evidently the most dignified of all employments. The man who engages in it is directly occupied in tracing the operations of the Mighty Artist who constructed the fabric of the universe. While other men are occupied by the objects which their passions or supposed interests represent as important, he is storing his mind with ideas and objects which have appeared important to Supreme Intelligence itself; and thus he is becoming allied, by his occupation and conceptions, to the great Mind from which all intelligence is derived. In the pursuits of moral science, in particular, the elevated nature of his employment is extremely evident. While the busy multitude labour in their various situations, and carry on the multifarious operations of social life, as husbandmen, mechanics, merchants, mariners, priests, lawyers, and statesmen, he employs himself, like a Superior Intelligence, in looking down upon the whole, surveying the relation in which all of them stand to each other, their mutual subserviency and utility, the errors into which they fall, the progress which they make, the advantages in their power which they fail to attain; and, like an overseeing mind, he arranges under a few principles the rules and the result of their

actions, and from thence reports their nature and their destiny.

A man thus occupied necessarily passes his life in much innocence, and remains a stranger to those sentiments of ambition and of avarice which hurry other men into the greatest crimes. This, however, is only of secondary importance when compared to the positive acquisition which he makes of intellectual worth. He acquires, by his pursuits, a considerable degree of perseverance or industry ; but, above all, his discernment of truth becomes acute, and he improves beyond other men that part of his constitution which is the most important, and which consists of the capacity of acquiring wisdom, by reducing, in consequence of arrangement, the whole events and objects which the universe contains, under the easy grasp of a discerning mind. Thus the pursuit of science is equivalent to the direct and intentional pursuit of intellectual superiority and distinction. Hence it never fails to produce in the mind a strong sense of self-approbation. The new ideas which it acquires, together with the capacity of passing, as it were, under its review, by little more than a single act of thought, the globe itself, with the nations which exist upon its surface, their character and history, never fails to give rise in the mind to a sense of expansion and enlargement, and to

afford a conviction that it is growing in dignity and in excellence.

On the other hand, the exclusive pursuit of science has its disadvantages. A man occupied in speculation, no doubt, improves his faculties, in the capacity of forming general views of Nature and of human affairs, and also in the capacity of examining accurately particular points of fact; but in the meanwhile he acquires little self-command. If his mind is not occupied by powerful passions, it is not because he has become superior to them, but because they have had little opportunity of being excited. Thus he may be innocent without possessing an excellent or a vigorous character; and any passion to which his situation may accidentally give rise will not fail to obtain the full dominion of his mind. Hence it happens that the miserable passions of envy and jealousy of each other's reputation so frequently find their way into the minds of men of letters, rendering them at once unhappy and contemptible.

From a consciousness of the elevated nature of their own employment, the passion of vanity, or an ill-founded arrogance, too frequently takes possession of the minds of speculative men. They are apt unjustly to despise the knowledge of men engaged in the ordinary occupations of life, which, though not so extensive, is always incomparably more correct than their own.

Speculative men have often very little independence of mind. In every age it has been usual to see philosophers, poets, and other men of letters, descending from their sublime contemplations, and throwing themselves into the train of men of rank or opulence, in the character of humble dependents and flatterers; thereby demonstrating that they themselves had in no respect risen superior to the admiration of riches, or the love of the pleasures which riches can procure.

This want of independence, which has so frequently disgraced the character of men of letters, resulted from their not having cultivated their own active powers, or the quality of self-command or fortitude; whereby they might have been enabled, either to encounter poverty and obscurity without regret, or to do something for themselves, by entering vigorously, during a part of their time; into the business of life, and securing their own independence by efforts of successful industry. Indeed a life spent in speculation, or in the pursuit of science exclusively, necessarily leaves the mind defective in this respect, that as it has not engaged sufficiently in the intercourse and the affairs of society, its energy or fortitude is never sufficiently cultivated. Intrepidity cannot be acquired by men, who never encountered peril. The passions cannot be subdued till they are first called



into action ; and a steady mind cannot be acquired by him who never encountered the buffets of fortune, or the rude assaults and the subtle devices which occur amidst the competition for distinction and riches.

In considering the advantages and disadvantages which result from the pursuits of business, without regard to general science, some distinction must be made with regard to the occupations of men. In a commercial community, in the present state of the mechanical arts, a great number of individuals in manufacturing towns have their whole time occupied in the performance of some minute occupation, such as the fashioning a nail or a pin's point, the feeding the spindles of a cotton engine, or the tossing a fly-shuttle, which are calculated to require no exertion of thought, and even to exclude all such exertions. These persons may, in general, be considered as in some measure having their intellectual character sacrificed for the convenience or the commercial emolument of the community to which they belong. In comparing men of business with men of science, therefore, we must always be understood, with regard to the former, to allude to those occupations which either afford some portion of leisure to their practitioners, which they may employ in reflection, or those occupations which from their nature call forth a portion of the

ingenuity of the human mind ; such as the various departments of the professions of merchandize, or law, or those mechanical employments which require frequent efforts of judgment ; and, above all, the persons engaged in the art of agriculture, which, by the diversity of tools and of management which it requires, the foresight which must be exerted, and the habit which it produces of attending to the operations of Nature, seldom fails to confer upon its practitioners, in proportion to their education and talents, a considerable share of sagacity.

Men of business naturally acquire, in a far higher degree than speculative men, an active, intrepid, and persevering character, or a larger portion of voluntary power and energy ; that is to say, they acquire more of the virtues connected with fortitude, self-command, or strength of mind. Men of business usually become superior to the ordinary passions of envy and jealousy, which frequently prey upon men of letters. They have also more confidence in the integrity of mankind, and more assurance of the result of their own powers or efforts, without undervaluing those of other men. Generosity also costs them less ; because they are capable of doing more for themselves. . With regard to the higher passions of pride and ambition, they learn to subdue at least the offensive appearance of them, and to restrain their operations

within the limits which the ordinary laws of society prescribe.

Speculative men, as already noticed, are apt to undervalue the talents or the knowledge of men of business. It is certain that the latter acquire a more vigorous and prompt command of whatever talents they possess, than those men who never exert themselves excepting in the leisured manner which scientific pursuits require. The ingenuity which men of business actually do exert is also at times very great. No philosopher ever tried or strained his whole faculties more anxiously in the pursuit of truth, than most men of business have at times voluntarily or from necessity done, in devising projects of aggrandisement, in making narrow means adequate to costly undertakings, or in encountering a temporary torrent of ill success.

Thus, by the wise arrangements of Providence, this world is so contrived, that many of the most ordinary employments of life produce no less intellectual improvement than even the direct pursuit of that object by the investigation of the works of Nature.

On the other hand, however, it must be observed, that men engaged in ordinary business, who never trouble themselves about the pursuits of science, are extremely apt to acquire a narrow and defective character. The riches which they acquire are likely to be expended

in vulgar ostentation, or in a degrading sensuality. If they avoid these vices, they are apt to become slaves to avarice. Thus in no respect do they make any approach towards the possession of a rational and elevated character, acting from enlightened views, and following out the high purpose of our existence. They can be regarded, upon the whole and ultimately, in no better light than as blind and unconscious tools, carrying on, under Providence, a part of a plan in which they have no interest, and which owes nothing to their good intentions.

The inference to be made from these remarks is obvious: A real distinction exists between the characters of those men who have devoted their lives exclusively to the pursuits of speculation and to the pursuits of business. Both of them are defective; but both have their merits. Men of science have more wisdom; but men of business have more self-command. The former are most likely to discern correctly what ought to be the ultimate object of human pursuit; but the latter are better qualified for pursuing with success whatever object they think fit to select as their business in life. These two characters united constitute the perfection of our nature. It is therefore the duty of a virtuous man to endeavour to unite them in his own person. This is only practicable by endeavouring to superadd a portion of liberal

science to activity in the ordinary business of life. Hence it follows, that the character of a mere student, who withdraws from the world and its cares and duties, to devote himself exclusively to scientific pursuits, is to be avoided; because such a man can never obtain in its full perfection that intellectual education which this world is adapted to afford to the human mind. In like manner, absolute and entire devotedness to an ordinary employment, to the utter exclusion of liberal or scientific pursuits, is to be avoided; because, in this way, no true wisdom, no elevation of character, and no enlargement of mind, can be attained.

There exists a prejudice, which, however, is daily passing away, that general knowledge is injurious to the vigorous pursuit of ordinary business; or that the one of these cannot advantageously be mingled with the other. This notion is erroneous; for though it is no doubt true, that men who have devoted their days to speculative pursuits cannot suddenly acquire the activity, fortitude, and promptitude of mind, necessary towards conducting ordinary affairs with success; and although it is in like manner true, that an ordinary tradesman cannot readily convert himself into a philosopher: yet it is now known, that when judiciously combined, during the progress of life, these two characters confer great advantages upon each other.

In the course of almost every man's life, some opportunity occurs in which, by the addition of a moderate portion of liberal knowledge, a weaver might have converted himself into a manufacturer, a petty shop-keeper into a merchant, a mason into an architect, or a mechanic into an engineer. In like manner, it is always found, that those men of letters are most fortunate in life who continue in the practice of some active and regular profession, and do not depend for their support and eminence upon general literature alone.

The activity produced by exercising the faculties in ordinary business, and in a regular profession, enables the human mind to engage, with unusual success, in speculative researches. The energy of character acquired in one department communicates itself and its effects to every other ; and this was one of the advantages possessed by men of letters in ancient times. Xenophon and Julius Cæsar immortalized by their writings the military enterprises which they conducted. They expressed themselves with an elegance suited to the accomplished society with which they associated, and with a simplicity natural to men who gave to literature no more of their time than was necessary towards the successful acquisition of it. Socrates, who instructed the Athenians by his lectures on the principles of moral truth, instructed

them still more by the example of his life. After a bloody battle, it was admitted by the whole army, that the prize for having acted with the most distinguished personal bravery ought to be bestowed upon him; but he displayed his moderation and generosity by waving his claim, that the prize might be adjudged to one of his most promising pupils, whose mind he wished to stimulate to the performance of great actions. The most distinguished of all the Roman orators was at one period of his life a military commander; he was also a statesman, a practising lawyer, and the most celebrated writer of his time up in moral science. It is thus that, in a well-disciplined mind, the vigour of the active powers gives decision and energy to every speculative effort; while, in return, by the acquisition of general knowledge, the activity of the mind is skilfully directed, and ordinary business is conducted with more art and ability, and in such a manner as to enable us to attain, in a higher degree, the confidence of mankind.

It is from the want of a tolerable general education, and of enlarged habits of thinking in persons engaged in ordinary occupations, that the useful arts remain so long in a defective state; and that the most distinguished improvements that occur in them are frequently produced, not by professional men, but by others of enlarged minds, from whose usual employment they

are altogether remote. The invention, and the most important improvements of the steam-engine, were the work, not of tradesmen or others who have most occasion to employ mechanical force, but of an English military officer and a Glasgow merchant; gunpowder is said to have been contrived by a priest; the glass manufacture is understood to have owed some of its most valuable improvements to an English nobleman; and if the English pottery was brought to perfection by an artist bred to that employment, it was not till many generations of tradesmen in the same family had passed away, and an individual arose who took delight in philosophical research.

From all this we may reasonably conclude, that little justice is done to the human faculties when they are confined exclusively to any one train of exertion. Our active as well as our speculative powers ought to be improved; and the one form of improvement cannot be successfully conducted without the aid of the other. For the one purpose, the business, the affections, and the cares of life, have been devised by Providence; and for the other, the book of Nature is unfolded to our view, in which the wisdom of the Eternal is written in characters which may be traced and interpreted by patient observation and reflection.



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PART III.  
OF RELIGION.

CHAP. I.  
OF RELIGION IN GENERAL.

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THERE are two kinds of religion. There is a kind of religion that arises out of the passions and the imagination of men; and there is a religion that is founded on reason or the dictates of the understanding.

The religious passion or feeling is called *devotion*. It is of a very mixed nature, and is composed of the passions of fear, amazement, and admiration.

From ignorance and weakness, men are often led to reflect with terror upon the Unknown Power that governs this world, and that dispenses unforeseen tempests, earthquakes, pestilence, famine, and death.

Both as a whole, and in the detail of its parts, the universe exhibits a splendid example of skill-

ful contrivance and arrangement. From what passes within ourselves, however, we know that skilful arrangement can only proceed from the labour of mind or intelligence. But the objects of Nature are so vast and so various, that we can form no clear conception of the character of the Being who could contrive and attend without distraction to the execution of so immense and so intricate a plan. Hence we are apt to think of the Power that rules the universe in a confused, amazed, and indistinct manner, but at the same time with high admiration.

Thus the Being that governs the universe comes to be regarded at once with terror, with wonder, and with high approbation. The mixture and union of all these sentiments form the sentiment of devotion. It is irrational in proportion to the degree in which it is made up of fear and unthinking amazement; and it becomes more allied to reason in proportion as it consists of intelligent admiration, or approaches to the perception and approbation of excellence. Like every other pleasing or painful sentiment, it is apt, when much indulged or repeated, to take complete possession of the mind, and to become a powerful passion; which is sometimes of an ardent, and sometimes of a timid nature, according to the view that is taken of the character of the Deity, and his disposition towards the human race.

The passion of devotion produces good effects. It assists in subduing the minds of barbarous men, and of leading them into just and regular conduct, by impressing strongly the idea of an intelligent Power that superintends the affairs of the world. The dread of offending this unknown Power controuls their actions when they have no reason to fear any human punishment or interference. Intelligent individuals rise up in the character of legislators; and, taking advantage of the devotional feelings of their countrymen, persuade them to submit to useful laws, as ordained by the gods. They also establish such religious solemnities as may confirm the idea that human actions are rewarded or punished by an Over-ruling power; and thus devotion is rendered the means of civilizing mankind.

But, like every other passion, devotion produces many bad effects. By agitating the mind, it enfeebles the exercise of the understanding, and renders us credulous of every marvellous tale that is told about the Power that rules the world, or the subordinate agents whom, it is pretended, he employs. Interested men take advantage of it to work upon our hopes and fears, till the human mind becomes the prey of the most contemptible superstitions. It leads to a misapprehension of the nature of our duty, and induces us to substitute the effects of devotional feelings, such as prayers, praises, and sacrifices, in honour

of the Deity, to the proper business for which we were placed in this world, the improvement of our intellectual character, and the diffusion of reason and of virtue among men.

A religion that is instituted to gratify the passion or sentiment of devotion must always, among a vigorous people, be in a state of fluctuation. Regarding devotion as highly meritorious, men endeavour, by all possible means, to increase it in themselves and others. They erect magnificent edifices under the name of temples, in which they may worship the Deity on extraordinary occasions. They set apart particular men who are to live with uncommon sanctity, and to offer up prayers for the people. To stimulate their own devotional feelings, they form beautiful paintings and statues of the supposed rulers of the universe, and institute expensive musical establishments to sing or celebrate their praises. In consequence of all these, the devotional feelings of the people are gradually increased beyond bounds. They become credulous and a prey to superstitious terrors. They regard the temples which they themselves have built as real dwellings of the divinity ; and they consider the images which they have formed as representations of his person, which he actually animates and inhabits as the human mind inhabits the body. They regard their priests as vicegerents of God, and as possessing his power

upon earth. They even imagine that all their crimes will be forgiven by the Deity, if they are only constant and fervent in their devotions, and sufficiently liberal that they may obtain the intercession of his priests.

Thus matters proceed for a while ; but it is the nature of extreme evils to destroy themselves. Men of penetrating minds are always, from time to time, appearing in the world. These perceive and expose to view the gross delusions into which the people have fallen. The priests, corrupted by ambition and luxury, having relinquished their original severity of manners, have lost their influence. Mankind, awakening from their dream of superstition, are astonished to find that, instead of paying due homage to the Deity, they have actually been dishonouring him, by comparing him to images made of wood and stone, and by supposing him to inhabit temples built by mens hands. The devotional passion, uniting with the disapprobation of past folly, is kindled to its highest vehemence. The priests are driven away as impostors ; the altars and images are broken down as instruments of an idolatry unworthy of God, and degrading to the human mind ; and men resolve henceforth to honour the Author of the universe only by the pure contemplation and the spiritual admiration and worship of his excellent nature:

This also passes current for a time ; but gradually, from the want of visible objects and splendid ceremonies to assist the imagination, the sentiment of devotion declines and passes away. Men soon begin to reflect less frequently and with much indifference upon the Power that contrived and governs the world ; and religious notions gradually lose their influence.—In this state of things, it occurs to some individuals, that mankind have become too inattentive to the skill and energy that are displayed in the creation and management of the universe. The more they reflect upon the subject, and the more they contemplate the vast and various frame of Nature, the more ardent does their devotion become. They attempt to communicate their feelings, and find their zeal increased by opposition. By degrees they gain proselytes ; and that they may diffuse more widely the spirit that animates themselves, and assist and inflame the devotion of others, they make vehement prayers and orations ; they institute solemnities ; they call in the aid of beautiful music ; they build temples ; they appoint select persons to officiate in these temples ; and, step by step, they commence again the career of superstition which in former ages was run by their fathers. Thus in papal Rome, the temples which had originally been built in honour of Jupiter and the gods, were afterwards pressed into the service of a cor-

ripted Christianity; and the old statues of pagan divinities, which the first Christians had pulled down, were erected anew, and adored by their posterity as the holy images of saints and martyrs.

Such has been the history of this passion when indulged among the restless and active nations in Europe. In Asia, however, it has in some countries been productive of very different effects. In the great country of Indostan, for example, which has now fallen under the dominion of Great Britain, in early times, prior to the existence of authentic history, by taking advantage of this passion, society was arranged in a form so permanent, as to set at defiance the lapse of ages, the calamities attending repeated conquest, and the persecution of furious fanatics of a different faith. Society is in that country divided into different hereditary casts or tribes. Each tribe has a separate profession allotted to it. Thus there are casts of agriculturists or farmers, of warriors, of mechanics, of merchants, &c. The highest tribe, or cast, to which all pay tribute, and which they are bound to hold in unlimited veneration, is that of the Bramins, or the priesthood, who are thus the permanent rulers of the community, by a kind of divine hereditary right, which consecrates their persons and their race. The speculative religion of the nation is mythological and marvellous beyond

measure. Male and female deities without number are worshipped, whose history and attributes form an intricate system. Idolatry and external ceremonies of every kind are encouraged. Religion is made to enter into every part of the business of life. To the different casts are allotted different kinds of food and different ceremonies. They cannot intermarry with each other without the hazard of defilement, which would expose them and their posterity to excommunication, or to be held as outcasts from society. The superstitious ceremonies imposed upon them are so numerous, that they can neither eat nor drink without caution and timidity, lest they offend against their religious laws; and were a stranger accidentally to touch the pot in which their food is preparing, they would be under the necessity, even in the midst of a famine, of casting away its contents.

The result has been, that superstition has taken such complete possession of the minds of the people, that although the Mahometan Tartars conquered their country eleven centuries ago, and have held the government of the greater part of it during all that time, with all the advantages attending the possession of power and riches, they do not amount to above a tenth of the population. The triumph of superstition over power, therefore, has in that country been



complete, seeing that, under the greatest disadvantages, it has resisted every effort for its overthrow. The blind superstition of the Hindoos appears to have fixed almost indelible marks upon their character, and even upon their physical constitution. From living for ages under the habitual terror of offending some invisible power, of neglecting some ceremony, or of giving some offence to the priests, who are accounted the favourite offspring of one of their gods, they have acquired a timid and feeble intellectual character, and even their bodily strength is diminished. In war they can be made in crowds to rush into danger; but it is without self-command, like persons under the influence of intoxication. Hence, although they can use, and even encounter fire-arms at a distance, and when wounded and dying continue to fight like men under the influence of despair, yet they have never been able, coolly and deliberately, to look danger in the face, and to advance steadily against the bayonets of an enemy. There is evidently a defect in their intellectual nature, or a want of self-command, derived from the habitual fears and superstitious weakness under which, for ages, they have been educated. Hence no possible accumulation of numbers has ever enabled, any of their princes to vanquish in the field an European army of 5000 men.

In ordinary labour, the same defect of energy

appears. A Hindoo carpenter executes his task in a very neat and sufficient manner; but the tools which he uses are of a small size, and suggest the idea that they were intended for children. If a beam, which an English carpenter would turn aside with his foot, is to be removed out of the way, the Hindoo must have the assistance of a labourer; and thus, by the aid of numbers, they endeavour to find a remedy for their individual weakness.

This want of voluntary power, or intellectual and corporeal energy, is not the result of the climate. On passing the Chittagong, a small river to the eastward of Calcutta, the territory of a different people, the Birmans, commences. Their religion, like that of the Hindoos, prohibits the use of animal food, but only as a moral precept, in the same manner as drunkenness is prohibited by the Christian religion. The Birmans are idolaters, and worship the image of one favourite deity, called *Buaho*; but they have no division into casts, and no hereditary or established priesthood, excepting a voluntary order of monks, which any person may enter. They have few or no religious ceremonies. Religion sits as lightly upon them as upon Protestant Christians; and they persecute nobody for religious opinions or practices. The result is, that although they live in a climate perfectly similar to that of Bengal, and use the same food with

the Hindoos, their character is altogether different.

In war the Birmans possess complete intrepidity. About the middle of the late century, their country was overrun by a neighbouring people of similar manners; but it was found that nothing short of extermination could render the conquest permanent. They cast off the yoke, invaded in their turn the country of their conquerors, and subdued it; but before this object could be accomplished, they were under the necessity of almost completely depopulating the territory.

In ordinary business, also, the same vigour appears; their labourers are found equal in bodily strength and persevering industry to those of any other nation in the world. In the southern part, likewise, of the same eastern peninsula of India, the Malays, who are Mahometans, and among whom a feudal government is established, are known to be the most daring and intrepid of mankind.

It seems evident, therefore, that their superstition alone, together with the arrangements founded upon it, is the cause of the weakness of the character of the Hindoos; and that by operating upon them during several thousand years, it has at length been productive, not merely of intellectual, but of permanent corporeal imbecility. This appears to establish the important fact

in the natural history of man, that if his voluntary energies are greatly decreased in any one respect, they are apt to sustain a diminution in every other.

Thus superstition, when carried to an extreme, appears to be one of the most enfeebling sentiments which can acquire dominion over the human mind. In Europe, the Pope's soldiers were long proverbially contemptible. The ancient native government of Indostan is, in like manner, theocratic, or that of priests, and is equally weak. Even among the mountains of High Tartary, which have been called the nursery of nations, and from which a vigorous race has repeatedly issued to overwhelm the corrupted states of the south and the west, and to renovate the human species, a superstitious or priestly government exists in one quarter, Thibet, under a visible and mortal divinity, somewhat similar to the Roman pontiff, but with still higher pretensions. It is not a little singular, that the subjects of the Lama of Thibet are just as incapable of defending themselves as the subjects of our European Pope.

So far as devotion is a passion which impedes the perfect exercise of the faculties, it ought to be suppressed, and rational religion adopted in its stead.

Rational religion, as distinguished from morality in general, consists of four things: First,

of a knowledge of the existence and character of the Author of the universe; Secondly, of an acquaintance with the relation in which we are placed with regard to him; Thirdly, it consists of the practice of those duties of which he is more particularly the object; and, lastly, it consists of a correct discernment of the tendency of his works, or of the future destiny of man.—I proceed to the consideration of each of these branches of Religion, or, as it is called, of *Theology*.

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## CHAP. II.

### OF THE EXISTENCE AND CHARACTER OF THE DEITY.

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THE rational belief of the existence of a Deity rests upon the following principle: There can be no change without a sufficient reason for its taking place; there can be no motion without a mover; no contrivance without a contriver; no building without a builder; no piece of mechanism without a mechanic; and no work of art without an artist. If a contrivance exhibit un-

common ingenuity, the contriver must possess uncommon skill; and if a building be immensely great, the builder must have possessed immense power.

The structure of the universe at large, and of the various plants and animals that this world contains, exhibits so many instances of skilful contrivance and arrangement, that we cannot avoid acknowledging it to be a work of art. In a dialogue mentioned by Xenophon between Socrates and Aristodemus a sceptic, it is justly remarked by Socrates, that “ it is evidently apparent, that he who at the beginning made man, endued him with senses, *because* they were good for him;—eyes, wherewith to behold whatever was visible, and ears to hear whatever was to be heard. For say to what purpose should odours be prepared, if the sense of smelling had been denied? Or why the distinctions of bitter and sweet, of savoury and unsavoury, unless a palate had been likewise given, conveniently placed, to arbitrate between them, and declare the difference? Is not that Providence in a most eminent manner conspicuous which because the eye of man is so delicate in its contexture, hath therefore prepared eyelids, like doors, whereby to secure it, which extend themselves whenever it is needful, and again close when sleep approaches?—Are not these eyelids provided,

“ as it were, with a fence on the edge of them,  
 “ to keep off the wind, and guard the eye?  
 “ Even the eyebrow itself is not without its  
 “ office, but, as a pent-house, is prepared to turn  
 “ off the sweat, which, falling from the forehead,  
 “ might enter and annoy that no less tender  
 “ than astonishing part of us. Is it not to be  
 “ admired, that the ears should take in sounds of  
 “ every sort; and yet are not too much filled  
 “ with the noise?—That the fore-teeth of the animal  
 “ should be formed in such a manner as is evi-  
 “ dently best suited for the cutting of its food,  
 “ as those on the side for grinding it to pieces?—  
 “ That the mouth, through which this food is  
 “ conveyed, should be placed so near the nose  
 “ and the eyes, as to prevent the passing unno-  
 “ ticed whatever is unfit for nourishment; while  
 “ Nature, on the contrary, hath set at a distance,  
 “ and concealed from the senses, all that might  
 “ disgust or any way offend them? And canst  
 “ thou still doubt, Aristodemus, whether a dispo-  
 “ sition of parts like this should be the work of  
 “ chance, or of wisdom and contrivance?”

Indeed, in every production of nature, so  
 much art is displayed, that we are, as it were,  
 compelled to confess that this universe has been  
 contrived and arranged by Intelligence or  
 Mind, and by a very skilful mind too. It is  
 evident, however, that the objects of Nature  
 could not contrive and arrange themselves.

Neither we nor our fathers could contrive the circulation of the blood in our veins, for it is only of late that we became acquainted with the fact. We must, therefore, conclude, that there exists a wonderful Mind, superior to man, which devised and arranged our constitution, and the objects by which we are surrounded.

But the validity of this argument has been disputed. Without denying that instances of design or of skilful intelligence do appear in Nature, it has been alleged that these do not prove the point in question. It has been asserted, that the existence of an intelligent Contriver and Maker of the universe is merely a supposition; that we can only observe the facts or events that occur in Nature; and are altogether ignorant of the causes or energies, if any such exist, which produce these events. A stone thrown aloft into the air falls back to the ground: We know the fact, but the cause or energy that makes it to fly towards the earth is altogether unknown, and we have no means of investigating it. In like manner, we see plants and animals on this globe; but the invisible energy that rears, and supports them cannot be investigated or known by man. We may *suppose* them created by some being, but the truth of this supposition can never be proved. Even when we have made the supposition, we have only placed the difficulty a step farther off, but have not removed it; for the question still returns, Who



made this being? The Indian priests supposed the world to rest on a huge elephant, and the elephant on a huge tortoise. When asked on what the tortoise rested? They said they could not tell. Had they not better have acknowledged at once their ignorance concerning the foundations of the earth; and had not we better acknowledge our ignorance of the causes of the appearances and events that occur around us, and avoid making suppositions, the truth of which we cannot possibly know?

I have stated this objection in all its force, because it affords an opportunity of explaining fairly the nature of the proof upon which the rational belief of the existence of a Deity, that is, of an intelligent Author of the universe, rests.

That we are ignorant of the essence or substance of which mind consists, is no doubt true; but the assertion that we are altogether unacquainted with the causes, powers, or energies that act and produce events in Nature, is erroneous. In moving our bodily organs, or in recollecting past events, we are conscious of an exertion of energy or of voluntary power, which is followed by an immediate effect in the accomplishment of our wishes. It is true that we are ignorant of the essence or substance of which this voluntary power or energy within us consists; but neither do we know the essence or substance of any object in Nature. We are

certain, however, of the fact; for we are conscious of it, that a power or energy does exist and belong to us, which is capable of producing events and changes in ourselves and in the objects around us. This power is an object of Science. We call it *Mind*; and observe and arrange its various exertions and qualities under distinct divisions, as we do the qualities of the objects of sense.

So far as concerns himself, therefore, every man is sure of the existence of an intelligent energy, which is the cause of all his actions, and of every work of art that he produces. With regard to other beings, however, it is no doubt merely by *supposition*, or inference, that he knows they possess minds endued with intelligence and voluntary power. An hungry dog shews great eagerness for food: When obtained, he devours it voraciously, and afterwards displays signs of pleasure or of gratitude at the sight of the person who bestowed it. When hurt, he complains, or resents the injury; and when kindly treated, he shews marks of gladness. To account for these appearances, we are under the necessity of *supposing* that this animal possesses a mind, and feelings, and memory, and voluntary power, very much resembling our own. This, however, is merely a *supposition*; but it is a supposition which we cannot avoid making; and a man who should act upon the opinion that his

dog, when trod upon, feels no pain, would certainly be accounted the worse brute of the two.

When a man sees a loaded ship in motion, and considers the adjustment of its various parts; when he observes the sails, which catch the wind and give it motion, the masts that support the sails, and the ropes that extend and command them; when he remarks the cabin, the hammocks, the provisions, and the various commodities which the vessel contains—he finds himself under the necessity of *supposing* that it is the work of beings possessed of mind, and skill, and foresight, and voluntary power like himself. A man who should think a loaded ship the work of chance, or not the work of rational beings, would himself be accounted abundantly irrational. In like manner, when we contemplate the structure of the meanest animal that this world contains, and observe that it exhibits marks of more wonderful ingenuity, and more extensive acquaintance with Nature, than appear in the formation of a ship, or any other work of man, we should possess little claim to rationality, if we could avoid *supposing* that this animal is the work of a skilful mind, that contrived and adapted its organs for their various functions.

— Upon an occasion of some importance to myself, I once received a short anonymous letter. It was written in a fair hand, and contained good advice, with which I complied. I neve

discovered who was the author of it; but I certainly entertain no doubt that it had an author; and I take this opportunity of returning my thanks to him for the interest he took in my affairs. Now, it appears to me that I have at least as good reason for believing that my limbs and bodily constitution had an author, as I have for believing that my anonymous letter had an author; inasmuch as it is easier to frame a short letter, than to contrive the intricate organization of an animal.

The argument goes still farther. It is a fact little attended to, but not the less true, that the existence of intelligent beings is at all times merely a matter of *supposition*. Every man knows his own existence by immediate perception; but he knows the existence of other men, as rational beings, only in consequence of their actions. How do I know, for example, that any one rational mind exists in the world excepting my own? I answer, thus. I perceive with my eyes a form resembling my own. It eats, drinks, and sleeps, as I do: It utters language. It expresses sentiments of pain and pleasure, and makes interesting and ingenious remarks. It fashions curious machines; and all its actions are regular, and have a tendency to produce some effect. From all these circumstances, I find myself under the necessity of *supposing* that this form is inhabited by a mind similar to

my own, that thinks, and feels, and chooses, and rejects, as I do. Still this is only an inference, or a supposition, invented to account for appearances; for in no case can mind itself either be seen or touched.

But we discover the existence of an intelligent Contriver of the universe precisely in the way that we discover the existence of each other. We find ourselves placed amidst a vast scene of revolving worlds. That on which we live is well adapted to the accommodation and subsistence of various animals. These animals possess the most curious bodily structure, and the greatest variety of intellectual character. They are all suited, however, to the state in which they are placed; and were one circumstance of their form or situation changed they could not exist. A fish perishes on land; the land animals perish in the water; and if the carnivorous animals had been formed without weapons to destroy their prey, they must have perished by famine. From this suitableness and accommodation of all the parts of Nature to each other, we conclude that it is the work of a mind that discerns, at least as well as we do, what is fit and convenient, and what means are necessary, for the accomplishment of any purpose. As we conclude from the productions and actions of a man, that a rational mind inhabits his form; so, from the skilful contrivance of all

the parts of Nature, we conclude that it is inhabited and animated by a powerful Mind. This great Mind is invisible ; but the mind of man is invisible also. This great Mind is only known from its operations ; but it is also in this way only that the existence of the mind of man is known. Hence it follows, that we have precisely the same evidence of the existence of the Deity, or of a Mind that arranged the universe, that we have of the existence of a living and thinking mind in any man or woman with whom we are acquainted.

Still, however, the question returns, From whence came this Mighty mind that contrived and arranged all the parts of the universe ? To this the answer is easy : I believe that I had a Maker, because I know that I had a beginning, and that I could not make myself. But there is no reason to believe that the Mind which arranges and animates the universe ever had a beginning. Indeed the contrary seems evident from all that we can observe of Nature. Individual beings are continually coming into existence and perishing ; but the great Spirit that animates the whole is immortal. The same plan of operations has been going on for ages, and the same kinds of plants and animals have been constantly reproduced, without any alteration having occurred in the order of Nature. Hence we know that the original Contriver still

on lures, and even that his purposes are unchanged. We not only know that individual men begin and cease to exist in succession, but we also know that our species itself had a beginning; for we know that our intellectual character is progressive, and every progress implies a commencement. We can even, upon this principle, look back into history, and discover that the existence of man upon earth is by no means of a very ancient date; for the most important inventions are still new, and we are still in a state of intellectual infancy. But the Mind that gave birth to this world and its inhabitants is equal in wisdom in every age; for, at the beginning of our existence, he must have foreseen our whole career, seeing he has adapted our intellectual constitution to our corporeal frame, and to the situation in which we are placed. It is idle, therefore, to inquire about the descent or origin of the Creator of this world. Indeed the question is altogether unmeaning, unless it could be proved that his existence had a commencement. But this is so far from being the case, that every fact and appearance in Nature indicates the contrary, and demonstrates that he is always the same.

—The notion of the Indian priests, that the world rests upon an elephant, and the elephant upon a tortoise, has no resemblance to the manner in which the skillful arrangements that ap

pear in Nature are here accounted for. These priests admitted what is not true, that the world must rest upon some solid substance. They were afterwards puzzled by their own admission, and at a loss to find successive foundations to support each other without end. In this case, however, we know that man had a beginning, and must therefore have had an author; but we do not know that his Maker had a beginning. We even perceive that the whole course of Nature is contradictory to such a supposition. Hence we are under no necessity of finding an author for his existence.

Perhaps it may be said, that the arguments here adopted, to prove that the Mind which contrived this universe had no commencement, may also be employed to prove that the universe itself had no commencement, seeing it continually endures, although the forms which it contains, and of which it consists, are continually changing. To this remark I do not object; for I cannot conceive that a skilful and powerful Mind would suffer its own wisdom and energy to remain unexerted. I have no doubt, therefore, that the universe, in some shape or other, has existed, and will remain as perpetually as its Author.

Taking it for granted, then, that this world is the production of a skilful and powerful Mind, I



proceed to consider the character or peculiar qualities of that Mind.

Upon this subject men are continually falling into errors. Sometimes, from presumption, they feign to themselves a God after their own image, vindictive, partial, peevish, vainglorious, even possessing the human form, and in every respect, but in power, a mere man, and often no very excellent one. At other times, from a kind of intellectual cowardice, men avoid venturing to investigate the Divine character, and satisfy themselves with ascribing to it in the gross every quality they value in themselves, and with magnifying these qualities to infinity. In both of these cases men become the worshippers of what does not exist. In the first case, they pay homage to a defective and unworthy creation of their own fancy ; and, in the other case, they worship they know not what.

To avoid these errors, we must seek the character and qualities of the Author of the universe in his works, and in these only. In doing this, our rule ought to be, to ascribe no quality or characteristic to the Supreme Intelligence that does not appear in his works ; and, at the same time, to ascribe to him every quality that he has actually displayed in these.

1st, In the early ages of the world, when the first men began to look around, and to consider their situation, the operations of Nature appear-

ed to extensive and so complicated, that it never once occurred to them, that one Being could possibly be capable of managing the whole. Besides this, health and sickness, death and life, prosperity and adversity, storms and sunshine, are things so different in themselves, and seemingly so opposite in their nature, that it was never once imagined they could all proceed from the same Being. The world was therefore supposed to be ruled by various beings of distinct and opposite characters. Some gave life, others took it away; some ruled the waters, and others the land; one being shot forth the lightning, while another was supposed to ride on the storm, and to give to the pestilential gale its malignity.

A farther acquaintance with the universe has clearly ascertained that it is one plan and one work, every part of which is necessary to every other. Its constitution depends upon a variety of minute circumstances; a change in any one of which would alter the whole. This constitution, however, as already remarked, is necessary to the animals which inhabit it; and they are necessary to each other. Storms are as much a part of the plan of Nature as sunshine, sickness as health, and death as life. As we infer the existence of an artist, then, from the many instances of design that appear in the world; so,

from the unity of the design, we infer the *unity* of the Artist.<sup>e</sup>

2d, One of the most remarkable circumstances in the character of the Maker of the world is the steadfastness of his exertions, and the unchangeableness of his purposes. From age to age, since man has existed on the earth, the operations of Nature have proceeded in an expected and regular train. Day and night, summer and winter, seed-time and harvest, have not failed to succeed each other. The hungry lion has always been fierce, the fox has been cunning, and the hare has been timid. The waters have always run towards the sea, and the stone cast upward has fallen to the earth without one instance of failure. Wormwood has been bitter, motion has followed impulse, and sound has been produced by the agitation of elastic bodies. The human character has never altered. It has alternately been timid, superstitious, and feeble, or bold, rational, and vigorous, according to the circumstance, in which it has been placed.

A notion has long existed in the world, that whatever is constant and regular must necessarily be unintelligent. This notion arose from comparing the steadiness which appears in the movements of machines or material objects, with the fickleness and versatility which are usually seen in the actions of living animals.

Hence it happens that the ignorant regard with little admiration the established order of Nature, the regular succession of the seasons, or the growth and health of animals and plants. They consider the thunder and the pestilence, the tempest, and the bed of death, or the occurrence of unlooked-for good and unexpected calamity, as the only proofs of the existence of a Mind that regulates the universe. They are therefore continually hunting after prodigies as proofs of a Divine Providence; and they regard with horror the impiety of those men who refuse to believe every marvellous tale of supernatural interposition that superstition has invented.

But the vulgar are not the only persons who have been misled by the opinion, that constancy and regularity of action are inconsistent with the exertion of Intelligence. Some philosophers having observed that the whole course of Nature is, without exception, regular and steadfast; that every object occupies its proper place in the system; and that no part could be otherwise than it is without deranging the whole—have thence rashly inferred, that the whole universe consists of blind mechanism, over which there can be no presiding Mind, because there is no appearance of choice in the formation of any object, seeing it could not possibly have been different from what it actually is.

The whole error, in this case, has arisen from a strange misapprehension of the nature of intellect, and of the qualities which constitute its perfection. Steadfastness, or unchanging regularity of action, is one of the highest attributes of mind. It implies the possession of an unerring foresight, which provides beforehand for every occurrence, and supersedes the necessity of future interposition for the amendment of defects in the original plan. Accordingly, before the course of Nature was well understood, while the vulgar were continually appealing to unexpected instances of wars, earthquakes, sudden deaths, tempests, and other calamities, as proofs that the affairs of this world are directed by an over-ruling Power; these same events were actually the stumbling blocks which induced men of better sense, at times, to doubt of the existence of an arranging Providence. A more complete acquaintance with Nature has at last removed every difficulty, and has shewn that the most uncommon events arise from the operation of the same causes that produce the most familiar; that no exception to general rules is to be found; and, consequently, that no blind hazard exists in the universe, but that its Ruler pursues all his purposes with foresight and complete steadfastness. This steadfastness is so far from being a proof of the absence of Mind, that it is the surest demonstration of its presence and of its per-

fection; for chance or hazard must ever be fluctuating and inconstant: whereas, to provide against every casualty, and neither to alter nor to have occasion to alter any design, is the attribute of wisdom existing in its highest degree. To say, then, that no part of this vast universe could have been formed otherwise than it is, without deranging the whole fabric, instead of being a proof of the absence of design, most clearly establishes both its presence and its perfection. To say that the course of Nature is more regular than the actions of men, is only an acknowledgment that the Contriver of the universe possesses a more excellent character and mind than the frail and changeable beings whom he has created.

3d, Another of the qualities of the Supreme Mind appears to be the love of variety. In this world every species of plants and of animals is different from every other, and no two individuals of the same species are precisely alike. No two trees of the forest, no two leaves of any tree, strictly resemble each other. From the half vegetable, half animal polypus, or from the mute shell-fish on the sea-shore, up to the most accomplished of the human race, there exists a gradation which seems to include every possible variety of mind and of organization that could be included within these limits.

This unbounded variety renders the intentions

or, Author of Nature, on some occasions, very difficult to be understood. His works are often executed with much skill when there seems no good reason for exerting that skill. The creation of a fly, for example, must have required great ingenuity; but it may be said, what is the use of it now that it is created? It is indeed useful to the spider; but would the world have suffered any great loss if neither spiders nor flies had ever existed?

The extensive variety that exists in Nature may perhaps be thus accounted for: The Author of the universe is possessed of boundless intelligence and energy. He delights to exert these qualities in their full extent; but this cannot be accomplished without a vast variety of operations. The fabric of Nature is an exertion of great power and intelligence. Had a single plant, or an animal that now exists in it, been left out, the universe would have been a less excellent effort of skill than it actually is. It would therefore have been a less complete; and consequently a less valuable exertion of the wisdom of its great Artist. To make a man required much discernment; but perhaps it did not require much less to make a fly. Both of them could find room in this world; and had it wanted either of them, it would have been a less perfect fabric; that is, there would have been less mind or contrivance exerted in its formation. A man

would rather wish to have been the author of many ingenious inventions than of one only ; and the Author of the universe has chosen rather to be the maker of a thousand worlds, and of a thousand animals, than of one world and one animal.

4th, The mind of man can attend with accuracy only to one object at a time, and it cannot perform vigorously more than one action at the same instant. But it would appear that the Mind which governs this world must possess the capacity of attending at once to an immense variety of objects, and of making the most various exertions of power at the same time. These qualities or attributes have been denominated the *omniscience* and *omnipresence* of the Deity. But as the investigation of them is attended with considerable difficulties, I shall refer it to the following Chapter ; in which I mean to consider very particularly the kind of connection that subsists between the Author of Nature and his Works.

5th, It has been disputed, Whether the quantity of goodness, or of benevolence and love to his creatures, can with propriety be ascribed to the Supreme Intelligence? It is evident, that what we call the benevolent affections, which arise in us from the habitual remembrance of pleasures enjoyed in society, cannot belong to his nature. ) At the same time, it is obvious,



that he prefers happiness to misery, as many pleasures are enjoyed by his creatures. He probably never fails to produce happiness when it is not inconsistent with the production of intelligence, which, being more valuable in his eyes, always obtains a preference. He has made the perfection or chief good of the inferior animals in a great measure to consist of pleasure. The ordinary state of their existence is happy; and by depriving them both of foresight and recollection, he has rendered it impossible for them to fall into severe distress. Yet, even with regard to them, the acquisition of skill or intelligence is accounted preferable to pleasure; and to induce them to acquire that skill, they are exposed to various sufferings. Man has appetites and affections like the inferior animals. To him, therefore, in a certain degree, pleasure is a good, and pain is an evil: But he is also possessed of a mind capable of recollecting the past and of investigating the future. As its improvement is the purpose of his existence, his appetites, affections, pleasures, and sufferings, are all made subservient to that important object. In the estimation, then, of the Maker of this world, happiness and misery are objects only of secondary consideration. The production of intelligence in his creatures is always his principal aim, to which their pleasures are continually sacrificed. What we call goodness or benevo-

lence, therefore, cannot be regarded as a primary or ruling principle of action with the Deity, nor can it, perhaps, be said with propriety that he loves his creatures. He approves of the meanest of them as an exertion of wisdom. He must be satisfied with human nature in an eminent degree, when he views the progress in which it is engaged, and discerns the height of excellence to which, by his care, it is destined to reach.

After all, it is very little that we know of the character of the Author of the universe. We can only say, that he is one Being, and that his intelligence possesses these marks of perfection, that though active, it is steadfast; and though, in this world, it confines itself to a single plan of operation, yet the variety of contrivance which it exhibits is unbounded.

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 CHAP. III.

 OF THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE DEITY  
 AND THE UNIVERSE.
 

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As the objects and operations that appear in Nature could not produce themselves, we are under the necessity of ascribing their existence to some powerful and intelligent cause. The term GOD, or DEITY, is only the appellation or name given by men to the cause of all things.

There are two ways in which the Deity may be the cause of whatever exists:—

He may have formed at first the plan of the universe, and so perfectly adjusted all its parts, that it proceeds of itself in its destined career, without requiring any further interposition on his part: Or, he may not only have originally contrived and put in motion the universe, but he may still be the preserver of it, and the energetic or immediate cause and producer of all its movements.

It appears to me, that the first of these ~~ideas~~ <sup>affords</sup> a very defective conception of the operations of the Deity, and implies, that they are to be regarded in no higher point of view than the efforts of a human artist.

When a man sets about making a machine, ~~represents~~ <sup>represents</sup> materials already provided that possess powers or energies in themselves, whose force he only directs and takes advantage of. The maker of a watch, of a clock, of an engine to move by water or by steam, only directs to a particular movement the powers of elasticity or of gravity, which Nature has already prepared and given him to work upon. When the machine is set a-going, he has nothing farther to do, for Nature does the rest.

But the cause of all things is in a very different situation. He can have no materials provided for him beforehand. Whatever energies are to be exerted, must begin, and continue to be exerted by himself. His own power is the source of all action. This being the case, wherever any power appears to be exerted, it must be regarded as exerted by him. Perhaps, indeed, it may be possible for him to confer upon beings whom he creates a kind of secondary power, by which they may become, in some respects, the secondary authors of events. But in every case, in which power or energy of any kind is exerted, and in which we have no proof that the Deity is producing it through the medium of created

beings, we must regard him as immediately producing it himself. This is a truth which ought to be well attended to. There can be no motion without a mover, no action without an actor, no power exerted without a powerful being: But in the case of the elasticity of bodies; in the case of gravitation, or that energy by which all bodies rush towards each other; and in the case of that vigour by which plants and animals grow and live—the most wonderful powers are exerted. These powers must come from the Deity, who is the author of all action or exertion. He may exert or convey these powers by means of created beings or secondary natures; but there is no evidence that he does so. In the present state of human knowledge, therefore, the repulsive force of a spring, the energy by which a bit of lead presses towards the earth, or the power by which a small twig arises aloft and becomes a tree, ought, by every rule of sound reasoning, to be regarded as immediate operations of the Divine force, energy, or power. Were these events produced by intermediate powers, or beings, the Deity would still be the original and primary cause of them; but, as the case actually stands, we have not the smallest reason to suspect that he does not by his own immediate power and interposition produce every event, and every change, and every effort that occurs in nature. The universe is not a piece of clock-

work, which, when set a-going, runs on of itself. It is a great workshop, in which the mighty Artist is continually occupied in preparing new tools to supply the place of those that are carried away or worn out by service ; or, it is a splendid, but unfinished painting, to which new figures are perpetually added, even while the hand of time is busied in blotting out those formerly delineated.

So far is it, therefore, from being difficult to prove that a powerful being conducts the affairs of this world, that the difficulty would seem to consist in removing for an instant from our thoughts the idea of his immediate presence and operation. But the variety, and at the same time the steadiness of his exertions, gives, to what is called the course of nature, such an appearance at once of wild hazard, and of dull mechanism, that we acquire a kind of confusion in our notions concerning it, which prevents our thinking much of its Author. Thus, by the very perfection of his skill and of his exertions, has the Deity contrived to conceal from vulgar apprehension the efforts of wisdom and of power which he is continually making within and around us. Thus is the terror prevented that might otherwise seize upon men, were they continually impressed by the overpowering consciousness of the Divine presence ; and thus, also, do we avoid that frenzy of enthusiasm

which might inflame the human mind, were we alive at every moment to the clear conviction that we ourselves, and all the objects we perceive, are animated and filled by the power and inspiration of the Eternal.

The connection, therefore, that subsists between the Deity and the universe, is that of cause and effect. He is the active, operating, and immediate producer, or cause of all the objects and events that exist or occur around us. A stone is hard, because the particles of which it consists cling to each other by a strong attractive force. This force is an effort of the divine energy constantly exerted. Water flows downwards, because its particles attract, and are attracted towards the centre of the earth; but this attraction is an exertion of the Divine power continually operating. This power is exerted by rule and measure; so that more compact substances descend with greater force, and bulky bodies are driven upwards. Thus, at every moment, by night and by day, during the lapse of ages, the silent energy of the Author of the universe is occupied in binding together every particle of the rocks of which the mountains and the solid globe of the earth are composed, and in pressing towards the ocean every single drop of water that flows in so many streams. When fire burns, it is because his present power is forming new combinations, and forcing aloft the

lighter substances, according to rules which he uniformly observes. Every blade of every plant that grows is an exertion of his energy; and every feeling, and every action of every animal on the earth, or in the waters, is an immediate effort of his power: So that, in truth, the universe is nothing else than a continued work or exhibition of Divine power constantly present and producing whatever exists.

The salutary obscurity, however, with which Divine providence has covered this important truth, has produced among mankind much ignorance of its reality. Because the mountains remain firm and stable, we find it impossible always to recollect, or even to conceive, that they are constantly bound and held together by the immediate operation of an intelligent Being. Because our actions are always the result of our own feelings or thoughts, we readily imagine that our actions are independently our own, and forget that they are exertions of that great energy which produces our feelings and our thoughts, and is the source of all the power and of all the action that the universe exhibits.

But reflecting men are seldom unwilling to acknowledge that external nature is exclusively and immediately produced by the Author of the universe. I shall, therefore, consider that point as sufficiently established without farther discus-



sion. The chief opposition to the truth now stated, has arisen from the difficulty of acknowledging or conceiving that human actions are produced, like every other event in the universe, by the immediate operation of the Deity. I shall, therefore, endeavour to illustrate this position by some additional remarks.

Men of all countries, languages, and religions, have, at different periods, entered with singular eagerness into the discussion of this speculative question. They have taken very various views of the subject, and involved it in much intricate argumentation. Hence it becomes of importance to understand clearly the state of the point at issue.

Both parties agree in asserting that the will of man is free, and that he can do whatever he thinks fit. The difficulty consists in determining what kind of freedom he possesses. On the one side, it is asserted that every action of every man's life is produced, like the events in the material world, by the Author of the universe, according to a fixed plan, and could not possibly, so far as we are concerned, have been different from what it actually has been: It is alleged that the greatest freedom any man can enjoy is to act as he inclines; but it is added, that man never acts or wills without some motive inducing or inclining him to act; and that these motives derive all their power from the constitution

of our nature, which is the work of the Deity. Thus all the actions of men are traced to the Author of our nature. Why does a man eat the bread that stands before him?—Because he is hungry. And why does hunger induce him to eat?—Because such is the constitution of his nature. In this way human actions are considered as necessary with regard to us, and as appointed or predestinated by the Deity. The supporters of this opinion are accordingly called *Necessitarians* or *Predestinarians*.

The supporters of the independence of the human mind assert, on the contrary, that man is the author of his own actions; that they do not proceed according to a fixed arrangement; that the Deity, as a lawgiver and a judge, may command and threaten; but that, unless by the exertion of a miracle, his interference in human affairs extends no farther. The adherents of this opinion also allege, that man can act without any motive; that he can will or act in opposition to all motives; that his actions are contingent\*, that is, casual, or the result of chance, and can be traced only to himself.—The following reasons seem to prove clearly that this last opinion is erroneous. They are not new; but it

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The writers upon this side of the question define *contingency* to signify that which might have been; or might not have been.

appears necessary to state them, because mankind do not yet seem disposed to consider the question as fully set at rest.

I. FROM the constitution of the human mind itself, it is evident that the actions of men are fixed and necessary, and must proceed according to an established arrangement. Our faculties are two ; perception, and will, or voluntary power. But it is obvious that the perceptive faculty acts in a manner that is fixed and immutable ; and at all events, that it is no way dependent upon our voluntary power or will. We cannot, if we were willing to do so, perceive that black is white, that twice two is equal to seven, that pain is better than pleasure, or that folly is more excellent than wisdom. The human understanding is formed upon fixed principles, which render it impossible for us to avoid perceiving that light is different from darkness, that a precipice is not plain ground, that sweet is not sour, that ignorance is different from knowledge, and that self-command is superior to imbecility of mind. Upon these and other points the will has no power over the perceptive faculty. On the contrary, the perceptive faculty possesses the most complete supremacy over it. It is only in consequence of the perception of hunger that we chuse to eat, and in consequence of the perception of thirst that

we chuse to drink. It is from the perception of pleasure that we pursue pleasure; it is from perceiving pain that pain and the hazard of pain are avoided; it is from perceiving the excellence of wisdom that we are led to pursue wisdom; and from discerning the inferiority and unworthiness of ignorance and folly, that we are led to guard against them. The voluntary power is never exerted, unless in consequence of some perception of good to be gained, or of evil to be shunned. If we had no perceptions, we would never act or exert ourselves. Our perceptions, therefore, are the causes which produce all our actions. But as our perceptions, by the constitution of our nature, are fixed and immutable and necessary, it is obvious that our actions which proceed from them must be equally fixed and unchangeable. To assert, therefore, that men can act without perceptions or motives, as they are usually called, or in opposition to motives or perceptions, is to assert that we can act without, or in opposition to, that which is the sole cause of action.

These truths may be farther illustrated by attending to the different classes of perceptions which excite men to activity.

Human actions proceed from four sources; first, from appetites; secondly, from passions or affections; thirdly, from reason; or the discernment of what is most excellent and right; or,

lastly, from some modification or mixture of these three principles.

1st. The dominion of appetite is best exemplified in the brute creation. They obey appetites and tendencies, which are obviously given them immediately by Nature, and without the influence of which they act not. The fierceness of the lion or the eagle is evidently the necessary result of hunger or of lust. Man is endowed with senses like the inferior animals. These give rise to similar appetites. In as far as these appetites direct his actions, man, like the inferior animals, is a necessary being, conducted like them by Nature to what purposes she thinks best.

2d. The affections and passions which grow up in the human mind are the result of our situation in this world. That situation was contrived and prepared by the Author of the universe. When man acts under the influence of his affections and passions, then his conduct ought to be regarded as the work of that Being who produced passions in his breast.

3d. It is a certain truth, that those excellent minds which act from the discernment of what is rational and wise, are of all beings farthest removed from any kind of chance or uncertain contingency in their conduct. Were any man possessed of an understanding so completely enlightened as to preclude the possibility of error;

were he at the same time endued with such a degree of self-command as would prevent his yielding to the temptation of doing what he did not approve ; —there is no doubt that, in every case, he would act with the strictest wisdom and propriety. He could not possibly do otherwise ; for he would in every instance discern what is right ; his strength of mind would enable him to act according to it ; and the very idea of doing otherwise would appear to him completely absurd.— Let it be supposed that, at the same time, another man should rise up, possessed of equal wisdom and integrity ; there is no doubt that, from knowing his situation, he would be able to predict accurately all the actions which the first would perform. To enable him to do so, nothing more would be necessary than to consider how he himself would act in similar circumstances. Discerning what is wisest and best to be done, and having no adequate temptation to act otherwise than well and wisely, he would know with certainty, that neither he himself, nor any other being possessing the same perfection of mind, could possibly avoid doing what is wise and right. Thus were any individual of the human race to exist long enough to enable him gradually to reach the degree of excellence now mentioned, and both to know what is most fit in all the circumstances of his situation, and also to possess that self-command which would ren-

der him capable of performing in every case what reason requires, there is no doubt that he would gradually become a necessary being. Superior to error and to weakness, it would be impossible for him to be guilty of folly. Beings of an equal nature would be able to foretel his actions with certainty ; and it would never occur to himself that he had any power to do what is weak or irrational. Hence we see that it is the tendency of our nature to ascend to the honourable bondage of necessity. Error is indeed manifold, but truth is one ; and the nearer we approach to a perfect acquaintance with it, the more obviously necessary will our conduct become. It is evident, that the most rational and the most perfect Being in the universe can only do what is wisest and most excellent. In proportion as our nature becomes assimilated to his, we too shall become the steady servants of good sense or wisdom, and daily more incapable of obeying any other master.

Human actions can only be produced by the appetites, the affections, or the understanding of man. But as these are all the workmanship of the Author of the universe, who formed the constitution of man, and prepared this world for his habitation, it is obvious, that when we act in consequence of any of these, our actions are truly and ultimately produced by the First Cause of all things, and form a part of the divine one.

rations.—Man, therefore, in his lowest state, when led captive by mere appetite and blind affection, is ruled by that Superior Power which contrived the human constitution and its present situation. Man also, in the most perfect state to which his nature is capable of attaining, would be ruled by necessity, by the happy necessity of doing what is wise and right.

4<sup>th</sup>. When men act from any one of these ruling principles, then, the Deity is clearly and obviously the cause of their actions. It is equally obvious, that every *mixture* of these necessary principles must produce a necessary result. An action, proceeding half from reason and half from appetite, will be as necessary as if it had proceeded wholly from reason or wholly from appetite. But many of our actions proceed from such a strange jumble of different passions and appetites mingled in different degrees, of rational considerations, and of weak partialities, that we can neither tell beforehand how other men, nor how we ourselves, will act in certain circumstances. This ignorance of ourselves, and of the characters of other men, gives an appearance of accident or chance to all the events of life, although there is in truth no chance in the matter. The same thing, however, happens in the case of material objects. When we are told of a great wheel upon which water is made to fall in a particular manner, we can readily fore-



tel the direction in which the wheel will turn round ; for the simplicity of the object leaves no sense of doubt, upon our minds, and excludes every idea of hazard. On the contrary, if a box containing an hundred dice is overturned, we say that it altogether depends upon chance what numbers the dice will turn up on falling out of the box, although there is actually no more chance in this case than in the former. No one of the dice can move itself any more than the great wheel, or depends less upon the force applied to it ; but being a small body, it is liable to be influenced by so many little circumstances, that we cannot possibly calculate or foresee the result. The event itself is not less certain and fixed than any other mechanical movement ; but we possess no foresight of it, and we are pleased to call our own ignorance by the name of *chance*. In the same manner, our incapacity to calculate the influence of circumstances upon the mixed temper and character of ourselves, or of other men, renders future events apparently dependent upon hazard, although the principles of human nature have remained fixed, and stable since man appeared upon the earth.

'II. INDEED it can easily be demonstrated, that if chance ruled over this world, or if human affairs were not destined to proceed according to a fixed arrangement, no such thing

as *knowledge* could possibly exist or grow up among men. Were it as likely that a stone would fly into the air as that it will fall to the ground; were it as probable that the next river will be found flowing upwards as downwards, or perhaps standing still and not flowing at all—it would be impossible for us ever to become acquainted with the universe, or with its constitution. Indeed, in these circumstances, it would have no constitution. Every thing would proceed at random and by chance. What was wholesome food to-day might be poison to-morrow. Trees might grow where corn had been sown; and man would be lost in confusion and amazement amidst a world in which no fixed arrangement or necessary and permanent order was established. This point is abundantly obvious; and with regard to the material world, nobody is disposed to question its truth. It is not, however, less true with regard to the actions of men. Since the beginning of the world, the same wants, the same passions, and the same faculty of reason, have ruled mankind. Men have sown seed in the ground, have reaped the harvest, have begotten children, have built habitations, and have practised different arts according to the measure of their skill. The general train and most important parts of human conduct can be as accurately foretold and relied on as any event that occurs in the mate-

rial universe. It is certain that, if the world endure, the waters will next year run downwards, and the trees will grow upwards; but it is equally certain, that he who shall next year have too much cloth and no bread, will be willing to exchange a part of it with him who has too much bread and no cloth. When a man obtains a lease of an estate for years, for which he is to pay rent, he calculates no less upon the willingness of mankind to purchase the produce of his farm than he does upon the fertility of the soil and the regular return of the seasons. Nobody would become bound as an apprentice, if it were not certain that the productions of a particular art will always be valued. There could be no such thing as what is called a knowledge of the world and of mankind, if human conduct were not regulated by fixed principles. The enactment of laws would be an absurdity, were it not understood and believed that men are ruled by motives and rational considerations. There would be no public law or policy if our conduct were at all times the result of hazard; and there could be no morality, if it were impossible ever to fix in the human mind some steady rule of conduct.

It is evident, then, that neither knowledge nor foreknowledge could possibly exist, if the affairs of the universe did not proceed upon an arranged and established plan. It has been al-

leged indeed, that, strictly speaking, there is no connection betwixt the existence of an event and our knowledge of it, as our knowledge is not the cause of its existence, which may therefore be contingent. It has been said, that although I know what a particular man will do to-morrow, yet my knowledge is not the cause of his conduct; his actions are not the result of my foresight, but of his own choice, which may therefore be casual.—But an obvious answer occurs to this: My knowledge or foreknowledge proceeds upon the *supposition* that his actions are previously fixed or certain, and that they will proceed in a particular train, and in no other. If the man had no fixed and established temper and character to influence his conduct, that conduct could never be foreseen, for we could have no principle from which to reason concerning it. Our foreknowledge, then, does not fix or influence a man's actions; but it is because his actions are actually fixed and influenced that we foresee or know them.

Often, indeed, we cannot foretel the actions of men; but neither can we always foretel the simplest events in the material world. A covetous man shall do a generous action, or a good-natured man shall unexpectedly act harshly. There is always a reason for such occurrences, though we may be ignorant of it. The one man may have been put into good humour

by some uncommon instance of good fortune; and the other may have been suddenly soured by disappointment, or some other circumstance must have taken place with which we are unacquainted. In the same manner, a chemical experiment shall succeed a hundred times, and shall fail the next time it is performed. A watch or a clock shall go ill, or not at all, and an eminent artist shall be unable to tell how or why. The whole difficulty arises from our ignorance of the actual state of the case. An accurate examination sometimes does, and sometimes does not, discover the latent cause of what astonished us; but he would have a strange mind indeed who should resolve the difficulty, by saying that it arose from contingency, that is, from no cause at all. The vulgar do better than this; for they ascribe astonishing events to witchcraft or enchantment. In other words, they ascribe incomprehensible events to incomprehensible causes.

III. WERE not human actions produced by perceptions or motives of some kind or other, there could exist no such thing as what is called *character* among men. It would be impossible for one person to know what another would do next. To say of a man, that fear, hope, love, hatred, interest, or reason, do not rule his conduct, is to hold him out as a being that is terrible to the human race, and whom none of us in our senses would approach. Happily our

species is very differently formed. We have a character and a nature from which our actions originate. If an accusation of infamous conduct were brought against a steadfast and enlightened man whose character we know, we would readily say that it cannot be true, that it is not in his nature to act unworthily, and that he must be misrepresented. We may indeed unhappily be mistaken, because we may not have known him sufficiently; but in as far as we have correctly understood his mind and its dispositions, we shall infallibly be found in the right.

As man, then, is not the author of his own existence, nor consequently of his own perceptions or exertions, and as human affairs proceed not according to chance or hazard, but are the result of a fixed and original intellectual constitution and character, which can be made the subject of knowledge and of foresight, it is evident that the actions of men are no less the work of the Arranging Mind that contrived and animates the universe, than any other part of the movements and events that occur in creation.

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## CHAP. IV.

### THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

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**B**UT against the opinion which has been now maintained many formidable objections have been stated. It has been alleged that it degrades the human character, and reduces man to the rank of a mere machine or passive engine in the hands of a superior Power ; that it tends to destroy all activity in man, by representing all his efforts as useless, seeing his destiny is fixed, and depends not on himself ; that if this opinion be true, moral instruction and education must be useless, as the appointed train of human actions cannot be altered by any efforts of ours ; that it is hostile to the important doctrine of a state of rewards and punishments after this life ; that it either destroys all distinction between right and wrong, or it represents the Deity as the author of all the moral evil and the crimes that exist in the world ; and, lastly, that it is contrary to our own consciousness of freedom.—I shall consider shortly each of these objections.

1st. It is not true that this opinion represents man as an unintelligent machine ; on the contrary, it rather represents him as a god. It represents his actions as exertions of the divinity residing within and around him ; and his mind as an emanation from the boundless Intellect that animates the universe.

2d. Neither is it true, that this opinion has a tendency to diminish the activity of men. It even stimulates them to higher efforts, by the proud sense which it inspires of the excellence of their nature, and by the confidence which they learn to repose in the invincible energy which supports their efforts and disposes of their existence. It is a notorious fact, in the history of mankind, that the highest exertions of integrity and of fortitude have in every age been produced by the belief of this principle. Attila the Hun, and Mahomet the Arabian, preached it with success to the barbarians of the North and the South as the means of inspiring courage. The Stoics and the first Christians taught it to their disciples as the sure source of steadfastness and resignation. It never fails to produce that contempt of the dangers and the pleasures of our present existence, which, when well regulated, prepares the mind for the most difficult undertakings. Accordingly, the vice into which those who believe this opinion are apt to fall, is not languor or indolence, but rashness



and enthusiasm. The knowledge that their days are numbered enables them to enjoy the present moment, and to regard every species of future hazard with indifference. The knowledge that their life and their actions are produced and supported at every moment by the immediate interference and energy of the Author of the universe, removes all superstitious anxiety from their thoughts, and inspires them with full confidence in the future conduct of the great Being who condescends to be continually occupied with their concerns.

It is merely a speculative or theoretical notion, that the belief of the predestination, or necessity of human actions, has a tendency to diminish the exertions of men. In real life, we neither eat nor drink with less avidity or pleasure, because we know that hunger and thirst form a necessary part of our constitution. Nor does the poor man labour with less industry for the gratification of his appetites and the supply of his wants, because he foresees it to be his destiny to do so during life. The career of avarice or ambition, of love or revenge, is not proceeded in with less vigour, because we feel ourselves hurried along by the impulse of irresistible passions. The sure prospect of success does not diminish our ardour. It is seldom, indeed, that, amidst business or pleasure, men reflect upon the original cause and source of all energy, or perceive

that their existence and exertions are not truly their own : But even were they to do so upon every occasion, they would see no good reason for diminishing their efforts. They would perceive that, in the great chain which binds the future to the past, and the successive events of life to each other, the pursuit of an object is destined to go before its possession, and even that in the estimation of the Creator of the universe, the activity of our pursuits is more important than the enjoyments we attain, and is productive of more lasting and valuable effects.

3d. It has been very strangely maintained that this opinion overthrows the utility of moral instruction; whereas it is, in truth, the only reason which can justify its employment. Were the affairs of this world, and the actions of men, entirely contingent, that is, did they proceed according to mere hazard, it would indeed be absurd to exhibit to mankind rules of conduct or objects of pursuit. It is only because the human mind has a fixed constitution and character, by which it necessarily regards certain objects and events with pleasure or uneasiness, with hope or aversion, that counsel becomes of any value. Moral instruction is the art of influencing mens actions, by pointing out to them the means by which they may obtain the objects which they necessarily love, and avoid the events which they are formed to fear. If the

human mind were not ruled by motives, this art could not possibly have any existence. It is the intention of the Author of the universe that the human race should advance in improvement. One of the means by which this design is accomplished, consists of moral counsel given by individuals to the rest of their species. This counsel is necessary to the end which it is meant to serve, and is provided or predestined to produce that end, as the rain which descends upon the thirsty soil is necessary to the fertility of the earth, and forms a part of the plan of Providence for supporting the tribes of animals that inhabit this globe. Had not the fruits of the earth a fixed constitution to which moisture is necessary, it would be absurd to send rain at regular periods; and had not the human mind a character that can be moved by advice, and to whose improvement knowledge is necessary, it is evident that counsel and instruction would be bestowed in vain.

4th. It is no doubt true that this opinion seems to contradict the notion of a future state of *judicial* rewards and punishments. So far as I have been able to consider and to understand the subject, it does appear to me that the two doctrines of necessity and of judgment to come, are absolutely inconsistent with each other--that they cannot both be true--and that the one or the other of them must be given up. Indeed

it seems impossible, without violating every rational principle, to reconcile predestination with hell-fire, or to shew that it is just and reasonable for the Deity to punish men for actions which he himself had ordained them to commit. Two modes of getting quit of the difficulty have, however, been attempted,

It has been said, that the ways of God and his ideas of justice are unsearchable and incomprehensible; that they ought not to be judged of by the ideas of men; and that a thing may seem reasonable and right to him which does not appear so to us\*. The ways of the Deity would, indeed, be most unsearchably and incomprehensibly irrational, according to ordinary rules of reasoning, could he at once be the author and the punisher of the same events. But it is not true that any thing can appear right to the Deity which appears wrong to us, when we are rightly instructed as to the state of the case. Human reason proceeds as immediately from the Deity as any other part of his works or of his conduct, and is as much a declaration of his character and nature. Were any part of his ways, therefore, inconsistent with the sound dic-

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In the Christian world, the supporters of this opinion, about a century ago, were usually called *Supralapsarians*. They believed that God fore-ordained the fall of Adam, and, at the same time, that he will punish men to all eternity on account of that fall.

tates of the human understanding, it would follow that the Author of Nature is liable to contradict himself, and to fall into imbecility and folly; an event which we have no cause to believe can ever take place. His conduct, therefore, cannot fail to coincide with those principles which he has formed the human mind to approve.

The second attempt to reconcile predestination with future punishments consists in endeavouring to modify the necessity of human actions. It is supposed that the Deity does not *ordain* or produce the bad actions of men, and that he only *permits* them\*. Supposing this notion to be true, it does not overcome the difficulty. For supposing the Deity to have foreseen, that if man was created with certain dispositions, and with a certain character, he would undoubtedly commit crimes, and, notwithstanding this foresight to have actually created him with these dispositions and with that character, he certainly does become the author of all the evil, and give his sanction to all the crimes that man may commit. When the governor of a town foresees that if the gates are opened, the enemy will come in, and, notwithstanding this, does actually open the

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\*The supporters of this opinion were called *Sabbatarians*. They believed that the fall of Adam was only foreseen and permitted by the Deity.

gates, the blame attached to the entrance of the enemy unquestionably rests upon him. Sensible of this difficulty, some writers,\* have denied the Divine prescience or foreknowledge of human actions. But it would surely be a strange account of the wisest Being in the universe, to say that he acts without knowing the consequences of his own actions; or that he made the human race without having any idea of what they might afterwards do. The truth is, there is no such thing as permission under the divine government. The Author of the universe is the author of whatever occurs within its wide circuit. The human mind is not left to act at random, or to produce derangement in the government of the world. It has a constitution and a character; and the actions of men, like other events, are produced by the cause of all things.

We know nothing of the Deity unless from what we see in his works. But from the present state of this world, we have not the smallest reason to expect a future state of what are called judicial rewards and punishments; that is, of rewards to which the virtuous have a just claim, and of punishments which must necessarily, and

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Montesquieu adopts this idea—See *Lettres Persannes*. It is also adopted by Dr Adam Ferguson in his *Treatise on the Principles of Moral and Political Science*.

as an act of justice, be inflicted on the guilty. We perceive no such system now established around us. Pleasure is not necessarily connected with wisdom, nor pain with folly. The virtuous man is not blessed in proportion to his integrity; and the bad man is far from being miserable according to the measure of his wickedness. For the safety of our species, indeed, something like rewards and punishments seems established in the case of temperance and intemperance. At the same time, it is certain that no degree of temperance will always secure to us the enjoyment of health; and men who indulge their appetites in an irregular manner, often live and possess all their faculties to a good old age. It is not by rewards and punishments that the Author of Nature leads us to improvement, but by giving us passions, and placing in their way objects to be attained. He thus sets before us a race to be run; and it is usually run with eagerness and joy. While exerting our talents in the pursuit of power, wealth, or pleasure, we gradually acquire, and learn the value of, those accomplishments for the attainment of which we were brought into existence.

The idea, however, that the Creator of this world will hereafter reward and punish human actions, is at present very deeply rooted in the minds of men; and while this notion remains,

the important truth that the Deity is the cause of all things will always be received with much perplexity. Our hopes and fears upon this subject arise from that great source of all error in questions of this kind, the invincible desire which mankind have always displayed of forming to themselves a God after their own image and character, and from supposing that he must regard the affairs of this world precisely as they themselves do. We regard cruelty and oppression with much indignation, and often wish to inflict mischief upon the oppressor. We fancy that the Author of Nature views the conduct of a bad man with the same feelings of indignation and thirst of vengeance with ourselves. We are even apt to be misled upon this point by our integrity itself, and by our love of truth and of excellence. It is our duty to labour to acquire and to diffuse wisdom among men : But at times, we see individuals not only careless of their own improvement, but even eagerly striving to prevent the diffusion of knowledge among mankind, and attempting to perpetuate the reign of ignorance and of delusion over the human race. When at length we see such men suffered to depart quietly out of this world, we console ourselves by supposing that an invisible Power will still pursue them beyond the grave, and that the delay of punishment will only render it more severe at last. We forget that the Deity sees human ac-



tions from a very different station, if we may so speak, and therefore under a very different aspect from that in which we behold them. To us they appear as the causes of misery and of moral imperfection; whereas he regards them with approbation, as the efforts of his own wisdom for the production of ultimate and supreme excellence.

5th. But is the Deity then the cause of all the moral evil that exists in the world? To this question the answer is obvious—That in truth no such thing as moral evil is to be found in the creation of God; every part of which is good, and wisely formed.

What is called *moral evil* or *guilt* in men always arises either from ignorance or from want of self-command. A bad man is a being who is unacquainted with his true interest, or who wants strength of mind to pursue it. All that can justly be said against him, therefore, is, that he is feeble or unenlightened. But the Author of this world has stored it with every possible variety of minds that can be contained within certain limits. A gradation of intellect proceeds through the various tribes of inferior animals upwards to man. Among men the same gradation proceeds. Some are almost entirely guided by their appetites, and make feeble exertions of reason. Others are influenced by various mixtures and degrees of passion and of

judgment. At the head of all are placed those enlightened individuals who have learned to discern and to acquiesce in the great purposes of Providence, and who form the nearest approach to perfection that is to be found upon earth. In all this profusion of different minds and characters, no one could have been omitted without rendering the universe less various, and consequently less excellent. The Deity creates the envious man for the same reason that he creates the poisonous snake; he creates the ambitious man for the same reason that he forms the lion or the tyger. They exhibit varieties of mind and of character on the face of the creation. They call forth prudence and courage and skill in other men, to guard against the mischief they may produce. Revenge and jealousy, and other angry and dangerous passions, give rise to contrivance and much improvement, no less than the storms that sometimes spread desolation over the face of Nature. In this point of view they are not evil but good. Bad men are defective beings who blindly obey their passions. They are useful to society at large; and as individuals they cannot justly complain of their own destiny. They still hold a considerable rank in the creation; for the meanest and most worthless of the human species is possessed of superior intellect, and consequently of superior excellence to the highest of the infe-

rior animals. The same reasoning that would forbid the Deity to create an ambitious, a cruel, a voluptuous, or a covetous man, would have forbidden him to create the inferior animals, and even the human race, and perhaps any being whatever: For it seems essential to a creature to be inferior to its Creator; that is to say, imperfection must in some degree belong to its nature. But the crimes of men are only instances of defective intelligence, or of error and weakness. If, then, there was to be such a thing as a creation of any kind, it is obvious that it must have been filled with imperfect beings. At times, the conduct of such beings would necessarily bear the marks of their weakness and ignorance; and thus imperfection is implied in the very idea of creation, and cannot justly be regarded as an evil or impropriety in it. Man is in all cases as good and as perfect as the Author of his nature intended him to be. He is therefore liable to no censure or reproach.

In the universe, then, there is no such thing as enmity against God. There is therefore no such thing as guilt or moral evil. But does not this opinion overthrow all distinction between right and wrong?—By no means. It only overturns the erroneous notion, that man can possess either merit or demerit towards his Maker. This point is well explained by the similitude employed by the celebrated Preacher of Christianity.

The Author of our nature is as the potter, and we as the clay in his hands. He forms one vessel of ordinary materials for coarse and vulgar purposes; he forms another, with much skill and care, of a beautiful fabric, of richer substance, and for more splendid uses. The one of these vessels is obviously of more worth than the other, both in the eyes of its Maker and of all reasonable beings. But its greater value is not its own; it is the result of the superior skill and care employed by the great Artist in its formation. Such is the state of man. To some men their Creator has given better minds, and a better intellectual education, than to others. These are the excellent and the chosen ones of the earth. Their thoughts and their actions are a source of instruction to their associates, and are the means by which improvement is diffused through the world. They are essentially excellent and valuable; for they are the most valuable productions that the great Artist has fabricated: But they themselves have no merit on this account, and are entitled to no reward in consequence of it. The excellence they possess is the work of the Author of their nature. If they are still imperfect, it is because he did not think fit to make them otherwise; and to him belongs the merit of all their value or importance in the creation.

But although men cannot properly be consi-

dered as possessing either merit or guilt towards their Maker, yet they may very readily be guilty towards each other, and become just objects of punishment. This may seem paradoxical; but it is true. Nature has created certain animals in a state of hostility to each other. The wolf is at war with the lamb, and the hawk with the partridge. Man is at war with many animals, because they are dangerous to his safety. Were a wild beast to rush from the forest, and to assault the village which we inhabit, there is no doubt that both the inclination and the duty of self-preservation would lead us to unite for the destruction of the common enemy. Put an ambitious or a covetous man may be as dangerous as a wolf or a lion. If any individual, therefore, insist upon gratifying his avarice, his ambition, or any of his other passions, not by industry or fair arts, but at the expence of the peace and the safety of others, it becomes necessary for mankind to unite and to make war against him. If it is asked, What right has man to punish or to put to death his brother, who, as a necessary agent, is not guilty or accountable for his actions in the sight of his Maker?—it may be answered, That we have the same right to make war upon a mischievous man that we have to make war upon a mad dog, upon a furious wolf, upon a serpent in our way, or upon any other destructive animal. We

are justified in both cases by the necessity of our situation, and by the intentions of Providence. The Author of our nature formed dangerous men and dangerous animals, not to accomplish our destruction, or to be quietly submitted to, but that the skill and the vigour of the human character might be called forth in devising and following out the means of self-preservation. Thus the arrangements of Nature are always wise. Even lions and tyrants are valuable instruments of Providence for promoting intellectual improvement.

The Creator of this world could have made man at first all love and all kindness; but if he had done so, the moral world would have exhibited a scene of less variety, of less energy, and of less skill. It is by the rage of conflicting passions in the same and in different breasts that all the possible diversities of mind are produced, and that the ruling power of reason is awakened, exerted, and improved in the human character. He who is pursuing his enemy with fierce animosity; and he who is entering with unbounded eagerness into the quarrel of his friend; he who ploughs the rough ocean in search of wealth; and they who are lavish of life in the pursuit of glory—are all becoming skilful and active beings. Amidst the agitated state of things, which is produced by so many passions, it often happens, indeed, that individu-

als refuse to submit their conduct to any rational restraint; and that mankind, in their own defence, are compelled to have recourse to violence and slaughter. But in such cases, when we say that a man is guilty and punishable, we mean, or at least we ought only to mean, that he is formed with dispositions which render his existence inconsistent with our safety. When we destroy him, the Author of this world disapproves not of our conduct; but at the same time, he regards the man whom we call guilty as an useful being, whom he himself formed with wise intentions, and whose conduct he renders valuable.—Let us guard then against the thunder and the storm, against hunger and disease, against the rage of wild beasts, and of men who obey their passions and not their reason; but let us not assert that deformity or that evil exists in the creation of God.

*Lastly,* It is in vain to allege that this opinion, concerning the necessity of human actions, is contradicted by our own consciousness of liberty; for to what does this consciousness amount, unless merely to this, that we are conscious we can do whatever we please? But we are not conscious that we can do what we are not pleased to do, what we have no inclination to do, what we have no reason and no motive whatever to do. *On the contrary,* we are always conscious of acting from some motive or other, from some

reason, from some affection or from some appetite: In other words, we are conscious that we are rational beings; for to act without any view or purpose or meaning of any kind, and to be moved or determined by no one reason, is the description of complete idiotism. Even in our most trifling actions, we have always some cause, however slight, of preference or of choice, or we are ruled by motives or perceptions of good and evil; that is, we are ruled by the constitution of our nature and its situation in this world; both of which are operations of the Deity.

From all this it follows, that we have no reason to doubt the universality of the Divine agency, or that the Author of the universe is the immediate and active cause of every event, and of every change that occurs in the whole extent of creation.—Here, however, a difficulty occurs.—It has generally been understood that the universe contains two substances of distinct and even opposite qualities, mind and matter. The one of these is considered as capable of perception and of action; whereas the other is regarded as a mere solid, lifeless, and inactive mass. It may be asked, What kind of connection subsists between the great first Mind, who is the cause of all action and thought, and the immense mass of matter of which the solid globe and the bodies of animals are formed? Are Mind and matter both eternal? or was one of



them created? If so, out of what materials was it formed?

It is abundantly evident, that a passive mass, such as matter is considered, could not create mind. Mind must therefore have existed from eternity. But could mind create matter? This is a curious question. Creation out of nothing is obviously an absurdity. But from what materials could mind create matter? Mind is essentially active; matter is supposed to be essentially passive. It seems evident, then, that Mind out of its own active essence could not form a substance totally passive, solid, and of a nature so opposite to its own. One of two things must follow, therefore; either that matter is as eternal as mind, or that matter is not the passive substance that it is usually supposed to be.

The intimate properties of matter have not yet perhaps been sufficiently investigated to enable us to decide this point with precision. A variety of considerations, however, render it extremely probable that matter is by no means either a solid or an inactive substance.

It is not solid; for pure gold, which is the most compact of all substances, can be bent with ease without being broken. In this case, the particles on the side towards which the bending is made, must be brought nearer to each other than formerly; and those on the opposite side must be removed to a greater distance.

This proves, either that the minute particles of which the metal is composed do not touch each other, or that they are not truly solid and impenetrable; for if they were absolutely solid, and in contact, they could not be brought nearer, and consequently no bending could take place. It also proves that the particles of a body may be removed to a greater distance from each other without apparently ceasing to be in contact.

It is easy to prove that matter is not an inactive substance. We cannot take a stone, or any other material object into our hands, without perceiving that it continually presses towards the earth. This pressure, which we call its *weight* or gravity, is an effort that it constantly makes to fly towards the earth, which is the nearest great mass of matter. A large stone makes a greater effort than a small one: and thus we find that every particle of which this globe is composed is perpetually employed in making an effort to approach to every other particle. Were not the world bound together by this attractive force, it could not possible exist. Every clod of earth might fall into millions of infinitely small particles. A stone thrown into the air would never come back again; the rivers would not run downwards; and if a man were to leap upwards, he would remain for ever suspended between heaven and earth.

Besides this general attractive energy, by which all the parts of the universe are held together, different kinds or parts of matter are possessed of powers of attraction peculiar to themselves. Thus the loadstone attracts iron, and the needle that has been touched by it turns for ever to the pole; thus vinegar unites with lime, and aquafortis unites with most of the metals, dissolving them into a transparent liquor; thus also wood and coal, and other combustible substances, when brought to a certain degree of heat, attract a part of the air which we breathe, as we perceive from its rushing towards them, and forming what is called a burning fire. Numberless other attractions are daily becoming known by the successful industry of men of science. The more minutely matter is divided and examined, the more simple and the more active does it appear. Excepting the metals, the composition of which has hitherto eluded all research, it would seem that almost all bodies are compounded of a few principles, whose mutual attractions produce all the variety that exists in nature.

It might be supposed that the attractions, of which I now speak, would ultimately produce universal rest; but this is prevented by the powers exerted by the constitutions of animals and vegetables, and also by the operation of heat.

The plants which cover the face of the earth afford the means of converting the most inactive substances into proper food for animals. The decay of these animals affords new and better nourishment for plants; and thus a perpetual round of action is preserved in Nature.

The powerful energy which we call *heat* opposes the general power of attraction. It enters into all substances, and preserves their parts at a considerable distance from each other. Thus water and quicksilver exist in a state of ice, of liquor, or of vapour, according to the degrees of heat that they contain. Heat also modifies the attractions peculiar to certain bodies. Thus a pile of wood may remain undisturbed in the air till it rot; but if any part of it be brought to a red heat, the air immediately begins to unite with it, and never ceases to do so till the whole is converted into vapour and ashes. The ashes fertilize the soil, and the vapour is absorbed by the leaves of plants, or, uniting with water, is taken up by their roots, and again becomes a part of their substance.

Notwithstanding the obscurity, therefore, under which this subject still remains, yet as enough seems known to prove that matter is neither a solid nor an inactive substance, but on the contrary that its minutest particles, as well as its greatest masses, are powerful and energetic, I am, upon the whole, inclined to believe that

there is, in truth, only one substance in the universe; that this substance is mind; and that thus God is indeed All, and in All that exists.

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## CHAP. V.

### DUTIES OF RELIGION, OR OF WHICH THE DEITY IS THE OBJECT.

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THERE is no subject upon which men have fallen into a greater variety of errors, or more gross absurdities, than in their ideas of the services and duties they ought to perform, to superior beings. They have fasted, they have feasted, they have lamented, they have rejoiced. They have offered sacrifices of men and of all animals for their gods to feed upon. They have built fine houses for them to dwell in; they have burned incense to please the smell of their divinities, and made concerts of music to gratify their ears; they have composed songs in their praise; they have torn their own flesh with hooks and nails; they have washed their bodies almost without ceasing, and they have gone abominably dirty,

they have danced ; they have remained immoveable on a spot for years ; they have gone long journeys ; they have acted plays ; they have whipped themselves ; they have given money to priests ; they have walked with pebbles in their shoes ; and, in short, there is scarcely a freak or fancy that the human imagination can devise which has not been employed by some body or other to please his God.

All these errors have arisen from improper ideas of the Divine Nature. Mankind are always willing to fancy that their Maker differs only from themselves in the degree of his power to do good or ill. They are always, therefore, attempting to establish a commerce with him, to consist of flattery, gifts, services, and submission on their own side ; and on the side of the Deity, of protection, good health, long life, fine weather, good luck, and happiness in another world. Even after they have become sensible of the absurdity of this pretended traffic, and are satisfied that their appointed employment is to act with propriety in their situation in life, still they are willing to suppose that the favour of the Ruler of the universe, like that of the rulers of this world, may at times be more successfully attained by a spirit of humble dependence, of flattery, and of solicitation, than by seriously and steadily performing the business allotted to them. Hence has arisen the high value

ledge, and will of itself come of course, if we proceed to improve our rational nature.

2d, What is called the worship of God is an expression of fear or respect towards the Deity. The forms of it are usually an imitation of the forms in which powerful men are addressed. The pride, the cowardice, and the jealousy of the rulers of this world, lead them to wish that all who appear before them may seem defenceless and at their disposal. Hence arose the customs of uncovering the head, of bending the body, of bending the knees, and of falling prostrate to the earth in the presence of princes. The Deity, being regarded by the ignorant only as a more powerful, and therefore a more dangerous master, is addressed in the same form: And as almost all the religions originate among the ignorant, or in a rude state of society, all religions have adopted these ceremonies.

So far as worship expresses fear or terror of the Deity it is improper, because that sentiment is improper. It implies, that he is of an irrational character, and not to be trusted, because he may inflict hardships without reason or meaning. So far as worship is the expression of respect or admiration of the Deity, arising from a discernment of the excellence of his nature, it cannot be disapproved of; but to set seriously about making bows, and paying respect to the Deity at a stated period, whether we are sensible

at that time of any worth or perfection in his nature or not, is undoubtedly not strictly rational. By some artificial means, such as music, paintings, images, the grandeur of a temple, or the retirement and supposed sacredness of a particular place, we may excite in our minds the feelings of reverence, of awe, or devotion ; but these in themselves are of no value. They are of no use to the deity ; and they do not increase our own knowledge of what is true and excellent. When these feelings arise involuntarily from the discernment of the wisdom and energy which the Deity must have exerted in the formation of the universe, they are not blameable : but even then they are of little absolute importance ; for it is the knowledge of truth, and not the pleasing feeling attending that knowledge, that is valuable and excellent. It is even highly improper to excite feelings of awe and reverence in our minds, when, at the time, we have no immediate perception of worth or excellence. One of the reasons why we disapprove of gaming, is because, by exciting our feelings, it has a tendency to render us passionate instead of rational beings. In the same manner, if, instead of studying the Divine Character as displayed in creation and in the course of providence, men employ themselves in exciting their own feelings of devotion and of awe towards the Deity,



they may succeed in rendering themselves abundantly superstitious or enthusiastic, and abundantly devout; but they will never thus acquire enlightened and vigorous minds, and consequently they will never accomplish the business for which they were sent into this world. The pleasure that attends the approbation of excellence and the pursuit of truth is harmless, and is an inducement to the further pursuit of knowledge; but when excited alone, and independent of the exertions of the understanding, it never fails to render the character weak and irrational.

3d. Is it a duty to love God? It ought to be remembered that love or affection is an involuntary sentiment, produced by habit, which cannot be excited or refrained from at pleasure. If we understand rightly the character of the Deity, we shall perceive that he is the wisest and the most excellent Being in the universe, and that he is the source of all worth and perfection; but wisdom and excellence cannot be contemplated without approbation, nor consequently without pleasure. Love to God, then, need not be cultivated as a separate and distinct sentiment; it will necessarily arise from a true and extensive knowledge of his nature. Every attempt to excite it without this previous knowledge, can only be productive of a blind and irrational enthusiasm.

I cannot here avoid taking notice of an important subject, that of public worship. I am satisfied that, in the present state of human nature, the public and social worship of the Deity is a most valuable practice. The moral world is yet in its infancy. The wise are few. It is of much importance to the intellectual progress of the human mind that men should act reasonably, and fulfil the various ordinary duties of life : But if they cannot be prevailed with to perform these from rational considerations, and upon enlightened principles, they must be induced to do so, like children, by means of their passions and feelings. The belief that an all-discerning Being is present, and takes an interest in the whole actions of men, has so powerful an effect over the most barbarous and otherwise ungovernable characters, that it ought at all times, if possible, to be preserved entire in the human mind. This is most easily accomplished by the forms of public worship, which possess the double advantage of teaching the important speculative truth of the existence of a Divine Providence, and of deterring men from committing those actions which might prove hurtful to human society. Tho' a wise man, therefore, may consider these forms, in a particular country, as of no value in themselves, and even as having a tendency, by their influence over the imagination, to prevent the purest and most correct exercise of the un-

derstanding ; yet he will, upon the whole, regard it as his duty to comply with them, if they contain nothing absolutely pernicious or degrading to the character of a rational being. Hence, although we could scarcely think a man of sense justifiable in sacrificing, like Socrates, a cock to *Æsculapius*, yet in general, and where no dangerous system of superstition is established, it is unquestionably his duty to give full countenance to the forms of religious worship that he finds practised in his own, or in any other country into which he may enter. It will also be his duty to discourage what is called impiety, or avowed want of respect towards the Creator of the Universe, whether it is displayed by treating the forms of religious worship with levity, or by the vulgar practice of using idle and frivolous execrations. This last absurd custom was originally introduced by barbarians, who had no controul over their passions and feelings ; but it is now only continued by persons who imagine they derive a sort of importance, either from their presumption, or from the affectation of a vehemence of character which they do not truly possess. It is wrong in three respects : It injures the understanding of the person guilty of it, by the habit of uttering nonsense ; it offers an insult to the good sense of those persons in whose presence it is employed ; and, lastly, it has a tendency to diminish that reverence for the Su-

preme Ruler of the Universe, which it is of great importance that all men should entertain.

• But altho' it be doubtful how far the religious practices already stated ought to be regarded, as forming, in all conceivable circumstances, a necessary part of our duty, there can be no doubt that the two following principles ought to be considered in that point of view ; I mean, *resignation* to the will of the Deity ; and *imitation*, so far as it is practicable, of the Divine character.

I. WERE we at all times perfectly acquainted with the designs of the Author of the universe, and did we possess sufficient strength of mind to fulfil with ease the part which he has appointed us to act in it, no effort would be necessary to enable us to acquiesce in his will. We would perceive that his purposes are most wise and excellent ; we would therefore take delight in the contemplation of them, and would account ourselves honoured by having a share in their accomplishment.

• But the intentions of the Author of the universe are far from being at all times obvious. He often produces events, not on their own account, but for the sake of the consequences which they are calculated ultimately to produce. Passions are excited in the human mind, not that they may be gratified, but that they may lead to the exertion of our intellectual powers. The con-

triver and conductor of this world also exposes men to many sufferings in it; not because he takes delight in their misery, but because pain is the most powerful stimulant to activity, and therefore to improvement. Our ignorance of the ultimate purposes of Providence often renders it necessary that we should learn resignation, or to repose confidence in the wisdom of the Deity, and to presume that he will, at the long-run, conduct all things well and skilfully with regard to us.

This does not imply, however, that men are to sit down in idleness, and submit to any inconvenience in their condition, without making an effort to resist or avoid it. The human mind is a part of the course of Providence, and its exertions form a part of the operations of the Ruler of the universe. If hardships are sent to us, so also are skill and vigour to overcome or elude them. Man is born naked; not that he may suffer cold, but that he may exert his ingenuity in contriving, and his industry in preparing clothes, to protect him against it. Indolently and tamely to endure the cold, or any other hardship in life, and to make no effort to avoid it, would not be resignation, but opposition to the Divine will.

But if, after all his efforts, a man shall still find that many painful circumstances are attached to his lot, it then becomes a part of his

duty to endure it with firmness. We have the best reasons for doing so. This firmness is itself a high degree of excellence. Disappointment and suffering afford the best opportunities for acquiring it ; and they who possess these opportunities, and improve them, are truly fortunate, whatever their weakness may in the mean time induce them to imagine.—Upon this subject much has been said by moralists about the sufferings of individuals being necessary for the good of the whole, and that they ought to disregard their own happiness when placed in competition with the welfare of the universe. But it would surely be but a miserable kind of universe, in which each individual or even a very considerable proportion of the individuals in it, should be unhappy for the sake of the whole individuals. The actual state of the fact probably is, that no misery exists under the government of the Deity, which is not valuable to those who endure it, and necessary to their moral education. The Emperor Marcus Antoninus seems to have been of this opinion : “ How obvious is “ it,” says he, “ that no other course of life was “ more adapted to the practice of philosophy “ than that in which you are now engaged?” The sufferings of individuals are sometimes indeed of importance to the welfare, that is, to the improvement of society ; but, on these occasions, they are also of high importance to the

improvement of the sufferer himself as an individual ; and had a train of circumstances been expressly chosen to render him an excellent being, it will usually be found, that no other than that in which he has been placed would with equal success have promoted his progress in intellectual worth. When Martin Luther and other reformers attempted to rescue Europe from a part of the superstitions under which it slumbered, they suffered much, and were violently persecuted ; but they also became more enlightened, more artful, and more resolute men, than they would otherwise have been. The defenders of their country acquire intrepidity of character before they perish in the field ; and the instructors of mankind acquire knowledge and intellectual acuteness while they labour for the service of society. So that whatever advantages the world at large may derive from the sufferings or the virtuous efforts of an individual, he himself always obtains the first, and usually the largest share of intellectual profit from them.

In the mean time, it is obvious that he who conducts the affairs of the universe is a wiser Being than ourselves. It is therefore right that we should acquiesce, without reluctance, in his purposes, not doubting that they are wiser than any arrangements we could have formed for ourselves. And surely it is a pleasing reflection, under the

pressure of every human weakness, to recollect that this universe is the dwelling and the work of a skilful Mind, by whose vigilance no portion of it is overlooked, and by whose contrivance all its parts are rendered subservient to purposes of wisdom. While we sleep he is awake ; we are thoughtless, but he forgets not ; we suffer, but we suffer not in vain we are led by passion, and are liable to err ; but nothing is deranged by our passions, or marred by our errors. All is over-ruled, and rendered productive of perfection and beauty. No real calamity can occur to any individual of the hosts of beings with which creation is filled ; for the skill and the power and the watchfulness of their Leader have no limits.

II. To imitate the Divine character is also a most important religious duty.—The greatest apparent difficulty, in the study of moral perfection, is this, that it is all a matter of abstract thought. We have no models of it before our eyes. The imagination and the memory are assisted by nothing obvious or visible ; and the impressions left by speculative reasonings are always feeble, and ready to vanish from the mind. In other branches of science the case is different. When a man studies mechanics, he may, if he think fit, observe the effects of actual, and not merely of imaginary levers, pul-



lies, wheels, screws, and wedges, in accelerating or retarding motion. In studying chemistry, he examines different bodies by heat, by cold, by the contact of other bodies, and by every situation in which he can contrive to place them : When he studies history, he collects from every document an account of the opinions, manners, and actions of men.—Were we acquainted with any beings possessed of moral perfection, we could proceed in the study of it in the same manner. We might examine, in every point of view, their thoughts and their actions. When we had acquired a complete knowledge of these, we would have reason to regard ourselves as masters of moral science : When we had acquired sufficient self-command to enable us to act in all things like the beings whose characters we studied, we would be entitled to think ourselves actually possessed of excellence : For we would act as they did ; not as blind imitators, but as understanding the wisdom of their conduct, and rendering, not only their actions, but their whole character and purposes our own.

In the present state of the universe, we can only associate with human beings who are imperfect like ourselves ; and we know not whether any higher degree of created excellence does actually exist. The Author of the universe is indeed the source of all perfection ; and if we could enjoy an opportunity of knowing his thoughts and ac-

tions, we might no doubt study moral science as consisting of matters of fact like any other branch of knowledge. In proportion as we acquired sufficient energy of mind to judge and to act like this perfect Being, our nature would become truly excellent. If it is at all practicable to do so then, it is obvious that the easiest and the best form of studying moral science is to study the Divine Character; and the shortest mode of attaining perfection is to assimilate our character to it as a model placed before us.

When we would acquire the same knowledge that any artist possesses, we enter his workshop, examine his tools, observe the use which he makes of them, we consider the machines which he forms, the principles of their construction, the steps by which they are made, from the first rude fashioning till they receive the last polish. Would we acquire a part of the knowledge which is possessed by the Deity, we have only to proceed in the same rational manner: The universe is his great laboratory, in which a thousand transmutations, and the most curious operations, are continually going on. Dust is converted into grass, the grass of the field into a sheep, the sheep into a man, and the man into dust again. Let us observe accurately the operations of this great Artist, and we shall learn the rule by which he proceeds. In proportion to the

accuracy of our observation we shall possess the same knowledge that he possesses.

In the intellectual world we shall find him skilfully training up rational beings to perfection : We shall see an order of things so contrived as to rouse their hopes by pleasure, their fears by pain, their curiosity by novelties, their courage and invention by danger and want ; and the whole frame of Nature so arranged, as almost, in spite of themselves, to produce in their minds no small degree of knowledge and energy. By observing the tendency of the arrangements contained in the universe, and the effects which its constitution is formed to produce on the mind of man, we shall discover the objects which the Deity himself is pursuing ; what that is which he approves, and what is the nature of his character, and consequently of perfection. We shall perceive his general purpose to be, that our bodies should be healthful, our species numerous, and our minds enlightened. We shall also see that he accounts the welfare of our bodies only valuable in as far as it contributes to produce intellectual worth. This will appear from the hazards to which he exposes us, and the destruction to which we are made liable from so many quarters, which we are left to guard against in the best manner we can by our own skill and care.

It is not only possible to know something of

the character and purposes of the perfect Being who governs nature, but even in some degree to make our minds to resemble his mind. One block of marble resembles another when it is of the same shape, size, and colour. Minds resemble each other when they think the same thoughts, entertain the same designs, and pursue them in a similar manner. Let any man look at the common steam-engine, and consider the form of the machine, the nature of the elastic power that moves it, the manner in which the vacuum is produced, its effects, and the whole apparatus, so as to comprehend clearly the purpose and construction of it; while he reflects upon these objects, and has these ideas in his thoughts, his mind for the time resembles the mind of the artist at the period when he made the invention. The original contriver may have possessed more intellectual energy than many of those who now understand his machine; but in proportion as they possess with equal clearness the same ideas, and dwell upon the same conceptions, they have become similar artists, similar men, and in all respects similar minds. It is thus that companions and friends, who converse much together, and think of the same subjects, resemble each other in their opinions, inclinations, and character. Thus also, persons who practise the same employment, resemble each other in their language, notions, and behaviour.

and are actually and truly similar beings. Would we then render our minds an image and a faithful representation of the great Mind that formed the universe, we must endeavour to think the same thoughts, and to judge as he has judged. When Dr Hervey discovered the circulation of the blood, or when an anatomist looks upon an animal, and comprehends its structure, the mechanism by which its movements are performed, and the arrangements by which its remotest limbs are nourished, he thinks as the great Artist thought when he contrived this animal ;—a portion of the same ideas are in his mind, and in so far he resembles the Deity. When Dr Priestley discovered that our atmosphere is composed of two distinct fluids, the action of one of which gives the red colour to our blood, and is necessary to the support of life ; and when Lavoisier and other French philosophers applied this discovery to the explanation of every instance of the dissipation of bodies by combustion—they acquired some of the ideas of the original Chemist who contrived every combination of material objects. When Sir Isaac Newton investigated and discerned the rules and order by which worlds are made to revolve, he enabled himself, and mankind to behold a part, at least, of the universe, with the same eyes and conceptions with which the mighty Astronomer beheld it when he formed the vast projection of it in his infinite Mind. In

all these cases, and in every instance in which a new discovery of truth is made, the human mind becomes a more perfect image of the great Spirit to whom all truth is continually present. It is true we are still far distant from him; but it is also true, that while we persist in the pursuit of wisdom, every day brings us nearer to the wisdom of which he is possessed. The acquisition of new knowledge becomes more easy in proportion to the success with which it has already been pursued. Our progress will therefore be of an accelerating nature, becoming every day more rapid, and carrying us on with greater speed in the endless journey towards infinite knowledge, or a complete resemblance of the Divine Mind.

But to resemble the Deity, it is not enough to obtain a knowledge of his thoughts; we must also act as he acts, and employ ourselves in the same business in which he is engaged. For this purpose, we must particularly study to find out the schemes of wisdom by which he is occupied; and endeavour, as far as he may have placed it in our power, to assist in completing them. This, indeed, is perhaps the only rule of morality that is altogether unexceptionable, to endeavour to discover the purpose of the Author of Nature in the formation of this world, and to account it our only business to labour along

with him in accomplishing it. The great purpose for which he has obviously formed our nature, and this world, is to train up many beings to wisdom, or to the possession of much perfection. When we reflect upon the nature of intellectual excellence, we can perceive that it is good, and worthy to fill the universe. The Deity accordingly labours to extend its empire, as the best employment of his skill ; and in his labour we are permitted to engage. He, no doubt, is the creator, the preserver, and the instructor of the human race ; but the parents who bring a child into the world, who provide for the wants of his early years, and train up his understanding to knowledge, are also to be regarded, according to the measure of their power, as beings employed in creating, preserving, and enlightening the new inhabitants of the universe. The man or the woman whose ingenuity first taught the human race to bury seed in the ground, and to expect a harvest, did a service to mankind similar to what is performed by the great Parent of all, when he sends the sun and the rain to give success to the labours of the husbandman. They, more especially, who by their skill and courage and steadfastness, or by the sacrifices they have made, have contributed to establish those public institutions that diffuse knowledge and energy of mind among future generations, ought to be regarded as having acted the part

of a beneficent providence, and as having become the sources of an incalculable amount of excellence. It was the legislative skill of Lycurgus which produced that force of character that rendered Sparta so celebrated. It was the severe example of integrity which the first Brutus gave to Rome that raised that village to the sovereignty of the world ;—a sovereignty acquired indeed by crimes, but by crimes which arose out of the bold superiority of character that her citizens possessed.

As the Author of Nature has contrived the world in the way best calculated to render men skilful and active beings, so to imitate him we must judge as he does of what is to be valued and pursued. The ancient moralists expressed this idea, by saying that he is a wise man who imitates or follows Nature ; (for Nature was an abstract term which they used to avoid the frequent repetition of the name of the Supreme Being, and was necessary to avoid all discussion about the Power which governs the world, at a time when those who believed only in one God were accounted a kind of atheists). Nature, then, or, to speak more accurately, the Author of nature, regards death as no evil ; for he is at every moment destroying men by thousands. He regards poverty as no evil ; for it is the natural state of man, and productive of many efforts, and of much perfection of character.



He regards riches as no good, for they are bestowed without discrimination upon the wise and the foolish. He regards pain as no evil, for it is given to produce good, to lead us to preserve our lives, and to endear to the mother her infant child. He accounts pleasure no good, for he never bestows it for its own sake, but always with a view to some other object, such as the 'preservation of ourselves' or our species. The only true and real evils that Nature labours to teach us to avoid are, ignorance, folly or error, and indolence. Against these all her artillery are pointed; and the whole order of the universe is one lesson of wisdom, and one admonition to exert the energies of our character in the cultivation of it.

He, then, who attempts to imitate the Author of nature will be led to regard life and death, poverty or riches, pain or pleasure, as of no importance, either to himself or others, excepting so far as they are connected with moral excellence or degradation. He will consider an enlightened and vigorous character as the only good which he can acquire for himself or bestow upon mankind; and will employ himself, as Nature is employed, in rendering them wise and steadfast in the performance of what reason requires. *Happy indeed is the man who can*

thus consider his own mind as only a portion of the Divine Providence, or a part of the will of God, and can occupy himself wholly in diffusing reason and the love of Excellence among men. He is truly an image of the Divinity ; for he thinks the same thoughts, wishes to attain the same ends, and performs the same actions with the Deity himself. His nature is limited, but it is rising fast to a nearer resemblance of the Supreme Mind ; and may already be regarded, if we may use the expression, as an incipient divinity.

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## CHAP. VI.

### DIFFERENT RELIGIONS COMPARED.

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IF introduced in a state of society to which they are adapted, all systems of religion, however erroneous, may be considered as possessed of some degree of utility. All of them impress upon the human mind a belief of the existence of a superior Power or Providence that inspects the transactions of men, that is pleased with rational

and upright conduct, and disapproves of the practice of an unjust violence, or of whatever is prejudicial to the prosperity of the human race.

But, in a moral point of view, a very great difference exists between the value of the different systems of religion which have been promulgated and enforced in different countries. The religions with which we are acquainted are chiefly those of ancient and modern Europe, or those which at present exist, and have for ages existed, in the civilized nations of Asia; for we can scarcely consider as religious systems the superstitions of the Siberians and Taitars, of the Negroes of Africa, or of the rude original inhabitants of America. Leaving these out of view, therefore, the chief religions that have existed, or still exist, have been chiefly in Europe that of the Greeks and Romans in ancient times, and that of Christianity at a later period. The religions of Asia amount to three in number. First, the religion of Mahomet, which, besides Arabia, is in possession of Turkey, Persia, and part of Hindostan. Secondly, the Gentoo faith, which, in this last country, is adhered to by eighty or ninety millions of people. And, lastly, the religion of Boodh or Boodho, also called that of Gaudma or Fo, which prevails in Ceylon, the farther peninsula of India, China, Japan, and Thibet.

All these religions differ chiefly from each other in the following points : First, in the notions they inculcate with regard to the Power who presides over the universe. Secondly, in the external ceremonies which they recommend as acceptable to the Invisible Being whom they represent as governing the world. Thirdly, in the mode in which they authorise their own propagation. Fourthly, in the degree in which they attempt to interfere with the government of the state, and the ordinary transactions of life. And, fifthly, in the mode in which they regulate domestic society, or the law of marriage.

The religion of the ancient Greeks and Romans scarcely appears to deserve the name of a system of faith. It seems to have been little more than the superstitions of the vulgar, adorned by their poets, and somewhat dignified by legends borrowed from the Egyptian or Asiatic religions, and imported at different periods by travellers and philosophers.

Excepting that the Greeks borrowed the first rudiments of their literature from the nearest commercial people, the Phœnicians, and perhaps a little of their geometry and agriculture from Egypt, the various arts of life appear to have grown up among them by a gradual progress, and by that train of improvement in which it is natural for the human mind to pro-

ceed. Their religion, in like manner, appears to have been the result of that ordinary train of thought, in consequence of which a rude people are led to ascribe the great variety of events and appearances which this world exhibits to the operation of a corresponding variety of superintending beings who inhabit the air, the ocean, and the land. Indeed a great number of their divinities are so obviously the creatures of vulgar superstition, that they can be considered as having possessed little higher importance than that which was ascribed, three centuries ago, in Europe, to the elves or fancies, whose power was feared by the ignorant, and whose exploits were celebrated by the poets. They had the same passions that occupy the minds of men and women, and only differed from them in power. In general, however, they possessed the following qualities : they were enemies of oppression and fraud, and protected the innocent ; while, at the same time, each of these divinities had his own office or portion of territory allotted to him, beyond which his power was not exerted. These two qualities produced the good effects of encouraging integrity and humanity of conduct, and at the same time of banishing all religious quarrels from the world. When the Romans made war upon a neighbouring city, they began their operations by offering sacrifices to the gods who presided over it, promising them, if they

would change their party, richer offerings and more splendid temples than they had heretofore possessed. If the city was taken, they concluded that it was because its gods had forsaken it, and had come over to the Romans, who for the future adopted them into the number of their divinities. The Romans continued to take towns, and to gain the favour of new gods, till they had about 30,000 of the latter in the list of their deities.

A religion of this sort, being little more than a mere popular superstition, took a very light hold of the minds of men, and was chiefly supported by the magistrates of different states, to give aid to the laws in the preservation of the order of society. With this view magnificent temples were built, and priests were appointed to officiate in them; but these priests were usually nothing more than the ordinary magistrates, who considered their office as more of a political than of a religious nature,

Accordingly it appears that, at a very early period, private societies were instituted, into which members were initiated with solemn oaths of secrecy, or that they must conceal whatever they might see or hear there. The chief of these societies was called the *Eleusinian Mystery*; and it appears that the secret revealed to the initiated consisted of information, that the popular idolatrous superstition of the state was

altogether a fiction, supported for political convenience; that in truth there exists only one Supreme Deity, the creator of the heavens and the earth, who will bestow immortality upon the souls of virtuous men. We are told that, a few days after he was initiated into these mysteries, Alcibiades the Athenian, in a frolic, contemptuously overturned a statue of the god Mercury. As the initiated never gave countenance to those who publicly treated the national religion with contempt, it was only in consequence of his great popularity that he escaped capital condemnation on account of his impiety.

But in proportion as knowledge was more diffused, and the common people discovered the contempt with which intelligent men treated their religion, it lost its influence, and was dying a sort of natural death at the time when Christianity was introduced into the world.

The popular religion of the Greeks and Romans, therefore, possessed these advantages, that it interfered very slightly with the affairs of life; it could scarcely be said to inculcate erroneous doctrines, because it consisted merely of superstitious notions and practices, which were easily got quit of, in proportion as the human mind improved.

Of the present religions of Asia, that of the Mahometans is the most interesting to Europeans, on account of the influence which it has

had upon the history of nations. Previous to the time of Mahomet, the Arabians were idolaters, or they worshipped the host of heaven, that is, the sun, moon, and stars, which they considered as beings presiding over the affairs of this world. Mahomet was a reformer, and consequently, in some degree, an enthusiast. He reproached his countrymen with their idolatry, and assumed the character of a prophet, to assert with greater energy the most important of all speculative truths, that of the unity of the Divine Nature. He borrowed from the Christians of his time the doctrine of a future state of happiness and misery ; and by its aid he contrived to excite in his countrymen the most enthusiastic zeal for the propagation of the great truth, that there is only one God, the creator and ruler of the world.

The religion established by Mahomet has some very important peculiarities. In the *first* place, it has an infallible book, which in the countries where it is adopted is regarded as the law of the land, and regulates the decision of controverted causes in all courts of justice, together with the rights and interests of different orders of men. But an infallible law for the regulation of ordinary affairs is always an evil, as it renders perpetual whatever sorts of error or of ill government have been once introduced. Such a book, at the time when it was written, might perhaps be an useful work, and contain many valuable



maxims and rules for adjusting all kinds of business ; but human affairs, to proceed well, must be in a state of improvement, that is, in a state of change to what is better. Such a book, however, has a tendency to oblige the nation that adopts it to stand still, and consequently to remain behind other nations. Hence they have all the chances of falling back into barbarism that affect their neighbours, whilst there exists no possibility of their advancing farther in improvement.

The Mahometan law likewise enjoins to its followers the observance of a number of daily ceremonies, consisting of prayers and washings at stated intervals, which tend to fix down superstition upon the human mind. The duty also which is imposed upon every individual, of making a pilgrimage to Mecca once in his life, has the same tendency in a great degree.

As Mahomet was a reformer, and was resisted by force, he was tempted to authorise the propagation of his religion by the same means by which it had been opposed, and to stigmatise his own enemies as the enemies of God. This has produced in his followers a spirit of extreme intolerance, which has a tendency to render their intellectual improvement extremely difficult. The same spirit leads them to oppress, though they are prohibited to exterminate, the nation whom they conquer. This has given rise to a

most unnatural state of society in some countries which have been conquered by the followers of Mahomet.

Before the Turks, who were originally Tartars, subdued the Greek empire, they had been long enough settled in the countries near the Caspian Sea to acquire the religion of a more civilized people. By the time they subdued the country round Constantinople, and at last the city itself, they were become zealous Mahometans, whilst the nations over whom they established their dominion consisted of no less zealous Christians. Hence a line of separation was drawn between the conquerors and the conquered, which time has not been able to obliterate. One half of the state consists of masters, and the other of an oppressed people. In other nations, the evils of conquest have been temporary ; because in a short time the victor and the vanquished, mingling in the ties of affinity, have ceased to be distinguished from each other, and have coalesced into one common people ; but in Turkey, to this day, the invader is known from the native. Their respective religions have fixed upon them a mark, which has proved as indelible as that by which, in our West India islands, Nature distinguishes the negro slave from his European master. Hence the Turks continue to act the part of insolent oppressors to their subjects the Greeks ; while the latter, accustomed to insults,

and to a sense of inferiority, have acquired the characteristics of slaves in sincerity and cowardice. Thus an internal division exists among the people, which degrades the character of one half of the nation, while it renders the other haughty and unjust. The same evil has existed during many centuries in Hindostan. Before the conquest of it by the Mogul or Tartar princes, these princes had embraced the Mahometan faith. Their new subjects, the Hindoos, adhered, as formerly mentioned, to the religion of their ancestors with still more obstinacy than the Greek Christians have done against the Turks; and the result has been similar. The feebleness of character which their ancient superstition had produced was augmented, and society was retained in a violent and unnatural state.

But perhaps the most important part of the Mahometan religion is that which relates to the law of marriage. All religions have attempted, in some form or other, to regulate this most interesting of all contracts. It is the institution of Nature, the foundation of society, and the means by which the succession to each other of the generations of men is regulated; and accordingly, the adjustment of its form, and of its duties, has been overlooked by no legislator, whether he has assumed the character of a prophet, or merely of a prince. The religion of

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Mahomet represents the production of children to glorify God as a sacred duty. It authorises this duty to be fulfilled by polygamy, that is, by the marriage of a man to several women. This law, however, which has necessarily been received in all the countries in Asia that have adopted the Mahometan faith, has a powerful tendency to produce a permanent inferiority of character in a people, and a constant tendency to anarchy and revolution in their government.

It is probable that this law, upon the whole, facilitates population. It divides between the rich and the poor more equally than with us, that is, in a better proportion to their means, the expence of rearing the future generation, as rich men, who can afford to do so, will naturally be led to have numerous families. But, at the same time, there can be no doubt that this law must have a powerful tendency to repress the intellectual improvement of the people. The rich, in every country, dictate the fashions of life; and by this institution a fashion is necessarily introduced of treating women with jealousy, and thus of secluding one-half of the species from the ordinary society of the other. Women, thus shut up in retirement, must possess illiterate and unimproved characters. They must also be in a great measure prevented from carrying on any part of the business of life. From these

circumstances, more evils will arise than are at first obvious. One-half of society, instead of being useful, will become a burden upon the industry of the other. A secluded and unsocial life is introduced ; and as the powers of man are best improved by the intercourse of society, a considerable difficulty is thrown in the way of the enlargement of the human faculties. Besides this, the ignorance and the imbecility of one-half of the species cannot fail to affect the other. An Asiatic retires from the management of his business to the society of an unintelligent and weak being, who neither sees nor knows any thing of the world or its affairs. In such society he must relinquish his reason and his rational faculties before he can enjoy much satisfaction. In such society, however, he was educated during his first years, and a great part of his time must necessarily be spent. He cannot fly from it to the house of a friend, for no friend can receive him ; and he can receive nobody freely into his dwelling, least his female prisoners should be seen. This, at least, is the case with all those who live not in spacious mansions with a variety of apartments. In such a state of society, it is impossible that many men can acquire or long preserve much zeal for scientific pursuits, or that the improvement of literature and of ingenious arts can be very earnestly cultivated.

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These effects of the law, which regulates domestic society, appear even to the most careless observer of an Asiatic city. It occupies a large extent of territory, because each family secludes itself from every other. Every house is surrounded by a wall, and stands in an inclosed area. Each family thus fortifies itself, as within a rampart, against the intrusion of all neighbours. Hence it has happened that no attempt has ever been made in the cities of Asia to establish a free form of government, even when the people were driven to despair by the severest oppression. There exists not that rapid communication of sentiment which takes place where society is more intimately blended, by which men are led to repose sufficient confidence in each other, to believe that they can act under the mere authority of public pactions or laws without the interposition of a master. The mode of erecting their dwellings also explains the wonderful stories told us by the ancient writers of the immense extent of Babylon and of Nineveh. It also accounts for the great tracts of territory which in modern times are occupied by the Asiatic cities. This circumstance has greatly contributed to expose them to the enterprizes of invaders. The extent of their walls, in proportion to the population they contain, renders the defence of them difficult or impossible.

The law of polygamy has also had a very fatal effect upon the Asiatic governments, and has been one of the most ordinary means of introducing anarchy into them. Their princes have families by numbers of women. Each of the female favourites of the reigning monarch attempts to establish her own children in the most advantageous situations. Hence the Asiatic courts are at all times occupied by an endless tissue of dangerous intrigues. Attempts are often successfully made to inspire an old man with jealousy of his eldest son, the apparent heir. The knowledge of the existence of such attempts, or even of the possibility of their existence, and of the fatal effects which they may produce in a despotic government, disposes all the sons of the prince to watch the conduct both of him and of each other with the utmost jealousy. This jealousy is apt to burst out into open rebellion, and frequently does so. At all events, upon the death of an Asiatic monarch, his numerous sons, whose rivalry, hatred, and jealousy of each other have hitherto been confined within decent bounds, openly break out into violence. A younger brother knows that he is hated by the elder, who is now become his master. In defence of his own existence, therefore, he is compelled to have recourse to arms, and to win a crown, or submit to destruction. In this way the successor of an Asiatic prince has

often to begin his reign by struggling against a considerable number of desperate rebellions, and must wade to the throne through the blood of his nearest kindred. As success does not always attend the arms of the elder brother, the law of primogeniture, being frequently violated, loses its importance in the estimation of the multitude. The royal family itself, covered as its members must be with parricides and crimes, cannot be greatly respected by the people, in whose eyes success and victory become the only undoubted titles to obedience. Powerful subjects, therefore, or enterprising military leaders, are frequently tempted to disregard the claims of the reigning family, and to appeal to the fortune of arms as a title to dominion. When successful, they find a people, distracted by civil wars, and by the pretensions of different candidates, ready to acquiesce in any government that can bestow upon them a temporary repose.

Even should a reigning family escape these obvious calamities which lay waste the territories of a nation, and overthrow its prosperity by crimes and by sanguinary civil contests, there are other evils by which the law of polygamy more gradually, tho' not more certainly, undermines the safety of the state. The founder of a new dynasty or race of princes is usually an ambitious and artful military chief. His first successors, educated in an active reign, and anxious



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Secure their dubious authority, perhaps resemble him in talents and energy. Time, however, soon sanctifies their right to the throne, though originally founded in usurpation. The monarch, now placed in security, indulges in that luxury to which he is tempted by his situation ; and luxury, where polygamy exists, has more powerful and dangerous attractions, and is attended with more pernicious effects, than elsewhere. This kind of luxury, above all others, leads to an indolent life, and to the production of an ignorant and an unintelligent character. The prince is led to shut himself up among a crowd of eunuchs and women, from whose society he can derive no improvement, and to whose councils and passions he is ultimately led to intrust the most important affairs of his government. The armies of the state are soon neglected by a monarch whose favourites employ every art to inspire him with a disgust of the toils of war, that he may the more easily be retained within the precincts of his palace, and under their management and influence. The provinces are subjected to the most ruinous exactions to gratify their avarice ; and every place of public trust comes to be filled by men who undertake, not to administer the public affairs, but to extort large sums of money from the people to be conveyed to the favourites that rule within the palace. Thus the state experiences a rapid





